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STRATHEARN LYRICS

BY

THOMAS EDWARDS

Lyrics.

STRATHEARN LYRICS



STRATHEARN LYRICS

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

THOMAS EDWARDS



ALEXANDER GARDNER

Publisher to Her Majesty the Queen

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AND

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1889

TO
JAMES M'ROSTY, Esq.,
EX-PROVOST OF CRIEFF,
THIS BOOK
IS, BY PERMISSION, RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
BY
THE AUTHOR.

CRIEFF, December, 1889.

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Strathearn Lyrics.

STRATHEARN.

IN the bosom of Scotland there nestles a vale,
And a sweeter ne'er courted the southern gale ;
Even Nature's adornments linger and shine
When the advent of winter bids verdure decline.
Oh ! how fair is the prospect, how calm and serene,
When the glory of gloaming descends o'er the scene ;
In its bosom the throbs of disquietude cease,
For its influence nourishes goodness and peace.

Though its richness may rival an Eastern grove,
Where the breath of the rose melts the heart into love ;
Though its classical river rolls onward its tide,
In exulting importance of beauty and pride ;
Yet it is not its fragrance nor waters so pure,
That causes its name in my heart to endure :
'Tis the home of my childhood, the vale of my birth,
Of the many enchantments the sweetest on earth.

Ah, Strathearn ! thy beauties shall live in my heart,
When the fickle endearments of love shall depart ;
When the seas of misfortune around me shall roll,
Then the memory of thee shall enliven my soul.
Every vision of gladness that brightens my path,
Reflects but thy sweetness, thou beautiful Strath :
The mirage of gay fortune may lure me to rove,
But remembrance will cling to the valley I love.

SCOTLAND, LAND OF LIBERTY.

ONCE again from sordid slumbers would I wake my native
 lyre,
 Tune its voice to bravest numbers, rouse to patriotic fire.
 At the bugle call of duty who would fail to sing of thee,
 Home of valour, love and beauty, Scotland, land of
 liberty !

Swell with heart and voice the chorus, ringing
 over land and sea,
 Honour to the land that bore us, Scotland,
 land of liberty !


Many a field all grim and gory have thy kilted heroes
 trod,
 Haloed with a flood of glory, fighting for their home and
 God.
 Cowards fled and tyrants trembled when the watchword
 of the free
 Sounded o'er their might assembled—"Scotland, land of
 liberty !"

Down the dark and misty ages my unbridled fancies go,
And I see in war's red pages Caledonia's records glow ;
Rome's proud eagle, Norway's raven, crippled, flew back
 o'er the sea,
When they proved that fate hath graven, "Scotland, land
 of liberty !"

Ever shall thy sons defend thee while there gleams a
 battle blade,
For the hearts are true and tender beating 'neath the
 tartan plaid :
As our fathers crushed oppression and enslaving tyranny,
We will guard the dear possession—Scotland, land of
 liberty !

Glory wraps thy name in grandeur, as the sunlight does
 the morn,
Bathing every vale in splendour, every rock and moun-
 tain tarn.
Of thy fame the woods are ringing, zephyrs catch the
 witching glee,
And the very birds are singing, "Scotland, land of
 liberty !"

While the heather and the thistle on thy vales and moun-
 tains wave,
And the whaup and plover whistle requiems for thy
 storied brave ;



While the martial fire that made thee glows in hearts
born to be free,
Foreign foe shall ne'er invade thee, Scotland, land of
liberty !

IN THE GLEN AT E'EN.

IN the glen at e'en, in the glen at e'en,

O, I'm gaun to meet my dearie in the glen at e'en.

We hae trysted by the burnie at the risin' o' the mune,

When we 'll taste the joys o' heaven in the glen at
e'en.

O my love's nae jewelled beauty wi' a lang pedigree,

But a bonnie modest lassie wi' a love-beamin' ee ;

For her heart's a' her tocher, and to me her heart she's
glen,

For the lovin' vows I whispered in the glen at e'en.

In the glen at e'en, etc.

I've seen the sweet forget-me-not when drookit a' wi'
dew,

An' watched the starnies glintin' in the ever-bending
blue,

But sweeter far than dewy flooer or starnies' siller sheen
Is the love lit ee o' Annie in the glen at e'en.

In the glen at e'en, etc.

Noo the bonnie little burnie wimples thro' the fairy glen,
Wi' its bosom fu' o' secrets that the world fain wad ken ;
But oor love 's as pure 's the burnie, or the twinklin'
stars abune,

As we lie in ither's arms in the glen at e'en.

In the glen at e'en, etc.

O, it 's lang sin' we sauntered in the gloamin' arm in
arm,

Yet the meetin' wi' my dearie hasna tint its lovin' charm ;
For the nicht I'm just as fain to see the love-glints o' my
queen

As when they first allured me to the glen at e'en.

In the glen at e'en, etc.

A' my bein' thrills wi' passion at the thocht o' comin' joy,
For love is aye the gowd o' life, a' else is base alloy.

O, the world wad tine its beauty, and my heart its hope,
I ween,

If I couldna meet my dearie in the glen at e'en.

In the glen at e'en, etc.

In the glen at e'en, in the glen at e'en,

O, I'm gaun to meet my dearie in the glen at e'en ;
We hae trysted by the burnie at the risin' o' the mune,
When we 'll taste the joys o' heaven in the glen at
e'en.

In the glen at e'en, etc.

WHEN GLOAMING LIKE A LOVER STOOD.

WHEN gloaming like a lover stood
 Enfolding day's departing beam,
 Beneath the shade of Laggan wood
 I revelled in a gowden dream.
 Beside me fairy flowers were springin',
 Aroon' me Nature's wealth was hingin',
 Aboon me sat a lintie singin'—
 Singin' wantonly.
 Care frae oot my heart was fleein',
 Joy was floodin' a' my bein',
 Fancy to my thochts was giein',
 O' her guidance free.

Wi' mingled sang the woodland rings,
 As lad and lassie fondly turn
 To list the strain the Turret sings
 When trystin' wi' the bonnie Earn.
 An' noo upon the bank reclinin',
 O' buttercups an' daisies shinin',
 A fairy wreath he's fondly twinin'
 For her bonnie sel',

Noo the sunny braes they're speelin',
Airted by a tender feelin',
Echoes tell o' joy-bells pealin'
Doon Dallerrie Dell.

While worldlings bask in Mammon's ray,
Or climb the slippery steep's o' power,
The lovers hail the sinkin' day,
An' taste the joys o' birken bower.
Life has to them a sweeter meanin'
Than a' the miser's gouden gleanin',
For love had trysted them that e'enin'
Whaur the waters glide.
While the stars are ower them gleamin'
Ilka happy heart is dreamin'
O' the comin' pleasures beamin'
Roond the ingle side.

LOVE AND THEE.

WHEN Winter's weird and dreary tale
 Has died upon the morning air,
 And Spring trips gaily down the dale,
 With snowdrops smiling in her hair,
 The mavis woo's his mate
 In budding birken tree,
 And sings of all his bosom knows
 Of love's sweet witchery.
 So maiden, passing fair,
 Begirt with sunny glee,
 My heart wakes from its stony sleep
 And sings of love and thee.

When night in purple mantle lies
 On leafy wood and flowery plain,
 And stars throb in the silent skies
 Round Luna wreathed in cold disdain—
 The woodland warbler sleeps
 Within the blushing thorn,
 Yet in his dreams love beats as true
 As when he sang at morn.
 So maiden, passing fair,
 This heart may silent be,
 Yet in the stillness of its joy
 It beats for love and thee.

BONNIE EARN.

IF on this fair and verdant earth, which throbs with joy
 and woe,
 There rests a spot of rural wealth, where pleasures hourly
 grow,
 'Tis on thy ever hallowed banks, thou crystal winding
 stream,
 Where decked in beauties a' the year, they fire the poet's
 theme.

Amang the bushes by thy side, the wren and lintwhite
 jouk,
 And yellow wagtails croon their loves in ilka shady nook;
 The blackbird lost in foliage, in rapture sits alone,
 And pauses in his stirring strain to listen to your own.

Oh Earn ! bonnie Earn ! as ye wimple to the sea,
 Ye kindle in my drowsy heart the fire of memory ;
 And as a laddie free o' care, I speel thy banks sae gay,
 And revel in thy limpid flow till closin' o' the day.

How aften in thy bubblin' depths, and eddies' circlin'
foam,
I've cast the tempting bait to lure thy nurslings from
their home !
And when it failed I buckled up my breeches to the knee,
And probed them frae the friendly bield o' stane or cavity.

But years hae paled the ruddy glow that mantled boy-
hood's brow,
And intersected lines of thought traverse my forehead
now ;
And tho' I with the march of time in distant scenes may
be,
Yet still in fancy I will hear thy murmuring melody.

SONG OF THE EVENING.

PASSIONATE daylight dies ;
 Serene and beautiful the evening star
 Throbs in its silver radiance from afar,
 And lights the path where pensive memory lies
 In dreams of love and youth,
 Of thee dear dream of truth,
 Thy voice's gentle tone, and eyes of tender ruth.

Come love, it is the hour,
 When starry silence wraps the sleeping dells,
 And flowers, while folding up their fairy bells,
 Breathe fragrant odours soothing in their power,
 To Nature, tired and spent
 With all her merriment,
 'Mong purple hills and dells, in drunken glory blent.

The zeyphrs, bards of even,
 Sang late, then sank to sleep among the leaves ;
 No jealous spirit of the woodland grieves
 To mar thy voice's music sweet as heaven.
 Sing, love, as thou didst sing
 When youth and hope did cling
 Around thy tender heart to love's fire quickening.

Hushed is the thrush's song,
And folded is the airy swallow's wing ;
No sound disturbs except Earn meandering
Among its listening borders ; all along
 The vale in moonshine drest,
 The dew on each flower's crest
Falls gently like sweet thought upon the weary breast.

How pale the starry sheen
Fades in the moon's full splendour, like a dream
That stars my life's horizon, and would seem
 To merge in thee, my beautiful, my queen.
 What light is on the lea
 What song is in the tree
Both moon and evening bird in rapture speak of thee.

DALLEERIE DELL.

BLYTHER springs the laverock frae the corn,
 To warble welcome to the morn ;
 But sweeter doon Dalleerie Dell
 The lintie carols to himsel'.

O ! sweet Dalleerie's sunny dell !
 O ! sweet Dalleerie's sunny dell !
 Thy beauty floodin' a' my heart,
 Shone ower my youth wi' witchin spell.

There glintin' to the gouden day,
 The primrose stars the tufted brae ;
 An' shinin' in the bracken shade,
 The bluebell, sapphire o' the glade.

Thy bonnie mossy carpet spread,
 Springs only to the lover's tread ;
 Embowered aneath the cooin' dove,
 He tints his sorrows in his love.

Aneath the brimmle an' the fern
 The burnie mingles wi' the Earn,
 That seems o' lullabies possest,
 An' heaven reposin' in her breast.

O dear Dalleerie ! memory clings
Around thy name an' sweetly sings ;
An' a' her sweetest love-lit lays
Are sung o' thee wi' artless praise.

IF THOU WERT THERE.

DARK rolls the sullen Earn along
 'Tween withered banks of brackens gray,
 Where never warbler's cheering song
 To music wakes the gloomy day.
 The woodland murmurs wearily
 As Boreas rends its bosom bare ;
 But what were Nature's wrath to me,
 If thou wert there !

If thou wert there ! if thou wert there !
 The winter blast would rage in vain,
 And smiling summer deck the plain,
 If thou wert there !

A pensive sadness wraps me round
 As Fancy droops on weary wing ;
 The inner springs of life seem bound
 When memory would her raptures sing
 How could my heart with passion glow
 When thou art distant as a star ?
 Yet Fancy would her wealth bestow
 If thou wert there !

If thou wert there ! if thou wert there !

My soul would waken from its dream,
And sing of love its darling theme,
If thou wert there !



SONG OF THE ZEPHYR.

O WANTON zephyr of the May,
 Thou child of mirth and song,
 Soft is thy balmy breath to-day,
 The whispering woods among.
 Thy fairy wanderings must have been
 Through some enchanted grove,
 For that alluring voice of thine,
 Is sweet as hers I love.

“ I sang my early matin hymn
 Far in the Abruchill bowers,
 And wantoned in the forest dim
 Thro’ morning’s rosy hours ;
 I lingered long in sweet Strathearn,
 Earth’s fairest spot I ween,
 Where ilka fairy nook and turn
 Is bathed in smiling green.

“ I wandered over vale and hill,
 By ‘ Bonnie Ochertyre,’
 And kissed the spink and daffodil,
 A’ in their goud attire ;

I dried the violet's tearful e'e
When passing thro' the brake,
And wakened into dimpled glee
The dark face of the lake.

"I met a maiden charming, fair,
And pure as morning dew,
I played among her gouden hair,
And preed her hinney mou' ;
That's what has made my breath so sweet
And cheered me on my journey ;
And now she's aff wi' eager feet
To meet you by the burnie."



SONG.

Noo gloamin' sweet wi' noiseless feet
 Steals slow ower fell an' fountain,
 An' hides the scars that Nature's wars
 Hae left upon the mountain :
 An' roond the mune the stars abune
 Blink bonnie in the burnie,
 That scuds alang wi' laugh an' sang
 Ne'er tirin' o' its journey.

The airy swift has left the lift
 Whar late he wheeled fu' cheerie,
 Noo neath the eaves love's tale he weaves
 An' crosles near his dearie :
 The witchin' spell that wraps the dell
 Begotten o' the gloamin'
 Is dear to me, for then to thee
 My truant heart is roamin'.

Ken ye the grove whar timid love
 Mak's bold to end his sighin',
 An' taste the bliss o' beauty's kiss
 Wi' nane but Nature spyin' ?

There braggart fame is but a dream
That scarcely stirs the fancy,
But love is a' at gloamin' fa'
In that sweet grove wi' Nancy.



A LYRIC.

THERE may be joy in the ceaseless flow
Of human mind and matter,
Where the sordid dream of Mammon's glow
Love's sweet illusions shatter ;
But I long for the haunts where Nature's feet
Leave no impress of the slimy street.

Away to the woods and winding dales
My soul would fain be fleeing,
Where the fairy elves and their fairy tales
Fill all the poet's being ;
And the singing winds as they flit along,
But echo the tones of his spirit song.

And the filtered light of the noontide hour
On the woodland stream is dancing ;
And the golden crest of the sweet wild flower
In the virgin green is glancing ;
Where the linnet builds and the cuckoo cries,
And the throstle sings till the daylight dies.

But I've lost the path that once was mine,
Thro' the music haunted dingle,
And the dreams that round my life entwine
With Nature scarcely mingle.
O ! I scarcely know when she fills her bowers
With the song of birds or the breath of flowers.

O, there may be rapture in Fortune's smile,
When the soul leaps forth to meet her ;
But she cannot all my thoughts beguile,
For the smile of Nature's sweeter.
O, I long for the clasp of her guiding hand,
Her inspiring voice and her sweet command.



AULD JENNY'S SCHULE.

O, AFTEN when sittin' an' musin' alane,
 My thochts canter back to the days that are gane ;
 When my life was just roondin' itsel' into bud,
 An' the blue sky o' hope never sheltered a clud ;
 When the year seemed a stretch o' unlimited glee,
 For ilk season was brimfu' o' pleasure to me ;
 An' my heaviest care was the loss o' a bool,
 When 'twas stown or "swicket" at Auld Jenny's Schule.

Noo, auld Jenny Beardy was fam'd far an' near
 For the skill she displayed in impartin' her lear
 To wee strugglin' youngsters, wha saw in her e'e
 An incentive to master the A B C.
 Nae grand institution directed by law,
 But a cosie bit room wi' a form or twa ;
 Yet tho' we were packit like fish in a creel,
 There was plenty o' steerin' at Auld Jenny's Schule.

O, aften does memory her raptures disclose,
 An' pictures the "mistress" wi' specs on her nose ;
 Wi' a seam in her hand she wad work eidently,
 While the tawse, curled, lay like a snake on her knee.

An' wae fa' the wight wha wad venture to crack,
For he sune faund them circlin' his lugs wi' a whack ;
Yet aft were they hidden i' "sawpit" sae weel,
That for days they were absent frae Auld Jenny's Schule.

When the readin' was over an' the spellin's were spelt,
She wad cast on a stockin' or aiblins a belt,
An', cannily puttin' the task in oor leef,
She wad say—"Jist to keep ye frae wanton mischief."
Syne she'd sing o' Elijah an' Daniel the grand,
Bein' couthie an' safe in the Promised Land,
When we a' joined the chorus wi' freedom and zeal,
Till shook a' the rafters in Auld Jenny's Schule.

When "meenits" cam' roond we were ranged in a raw,
On the ootside i' hoose wi' oor backs to the wa',
When a flagon o' water, just fresh frae the spoot,
Was passed doon the line, gettin' moothfu' aboot.
Yet tho' she believed in the cauld water cure,
For different diseases she'd furnish a score ;
But for festerin' finger or sair hackit heel,
"Ladies' mantles" were famous at Auld Jenny's Schule.

O' games there were mony an' pleasures an' a'—
The "poachie," the "skippin' rope," bat an' the ba' ;
But the best o' them a' was a game at the bools,
The "mug" or the "ring," wi' its wonderfu' rules.

When a bool tirl'd oot o' oor pooch to the flure,
It was put in a roond penny spunk-box secure,
Till it got rovin' fu', then—I min' o't sae weel—
'Twas "habeek-a-ha" at Auld Jenny's Schule.

But the schule's lang been closed, an' the scholars has gane
Their ways thro' the warld in pleasure an' pain ;
An' some hae gane aff to the big schule above,
Whar the mistress hersel' learns her lesson o' love.
An' we wha are left in this region o' care,
Look back on oor youth in a kin' o' despair ;
For to think on thae days mak's the heart play the fule,
Sae pure were oor feelin's at Auld Jenny's Schule.

THE LASS O' OCHTERTYRE.

NEAR whar the Turret ripplin' rins
 Sae sweetly ower its pebbly bed ;
 Whar linties sing amang the whins
 To friskin shilfies overhead,
 There bide's a lass as blithe's the lark,
 That weel a hermit's breast micht fire ;
 The queen o' Nature's handywark,
 The bonnie lass o' Ochtertyre.

Like morning beamin' in the east,
 Sae charmin' sweets her sparklin' e'e ;
 The guileless feelings of her breast
 Are prompted by simplicity.
 An' O, her voice o' heavenly tone,
 Like treble in a seraph's choir,
 Alane wad fire the world to own
 The bonnie lass o' Ochtertyre.

Her regal mien beyond compare
 Is native to her lovely form,
 As is to spring the snowdrop rare,
 Or lily to the summer warm,

Nae jewels gay nor gold could grace
The simple folds of her attire ;
Whar rural beauty reigns you'll trace
The bonnie lass o' Ochtertyre.

When ane by ane the stars begin
To twinkle round the risin' mune,
Then to the trystin' spot I rin,
A' cares below, sweet luv abune.
The stars are oot the mune to greet,
My heart throbs wi' a wild desire,
For weel I ken I sune will meet
The bonnie lass o' Ochtertyre.

BONNIE MONZIE.

FAIRER than a' that the fancy can dream,
 Haloed wi' beauty an' love for its theme ;
 Sweeter than a' the sweet tones o' the lyre,
 When prompted by passion an' timid desire ;
 Blossom thy woodlands and flowery braes,
 Echo thy many-voiced chorister's lays ;
 A' that is fairest in Nature we see
 Lies in thy keepin', O Bonnie Monzie.

Bonnie Monzie ! Bonnie Monzie !
 Nature is happy in Bonnie Monzie !

Sweetly the Shaggie sings, kissed by the breeze,
 An' woo'd by the sun glints that dart through the
 trees,
 Till meeting the Keltie, they mingle their strain,
 Like true lovers never to sever again.
 Home o' the primrose, the bluebell an' fern,
 Cosiest corner in Bonnie Strathearn ;
 Frae ilka deception the mortal is free
 That links life wi' Nature in Bonnie Monzie.

Bonnie Monzie ! Bonnie Monzie !
 Care never rappit at Bonnie Monzie.

Proudly the auld castle towerin' stands
Among its green velvet an' far spreading lawns ;
The air o' antiquity a' its look fills,
The timmer that guards it is auld as the hills.
But thinkna though stately its front may appear
That pride rules within it wi' never a tear ;
Just enter and pleasure transfigures your e'e,
For "Welcome's" the watchword in Bonnie Monzie.

Bonnie Monzie ! Bonnie Monzie !
The lassies are jewels in Bonnie Monzie.

BOYHOOD'S DAYS.

O WEARY, weary grows the heart
 That waits on fortune's flower,
 And man amid the sounding mart
 Feels little but its power.
 Or if he haply knows delight
 Among the tinsel blaze,
 'Tis but reflected from the light
 That halos boyhood's days.

Dear sunny days ! unknown to strife,
 Like green in woodland ways :
 You light the shady paths of life,
 O golden happy days.

Alas ! how easily we learn
 Ambition's siren lay ;
 To deepest seas of thought we turn
 For gems of purest ray.
 But sweeter was the cuckoo sound
 To boyhood's eager quest,
 And brighter far the pebble round
 That skimmed the river's breast.
 Dear sunny day, etc.



Can pleasure with its silken toys
Give hopes of mirth to last ?
Or fleeting fortune's airy joys
Redeem the happy past ?
The fickle world may deign to smile,
And lend the brow its bays,
But dearer to the heart the while
To dream of boyhood's days.

Dear sunny days ! unknown to strife,
Like green in woodland ways :
You light the shady path of life,
O golden happy days.

SONG OF APRIL.

AWAKE, awake ! from slumber rise,
 The earth begins to blossom ;
 Tho' April tears fill Nature's eyes
 There's rapture in her bosom.
 The primrose paints the dewy dell,
 In beauty's everlasting spell,
 And wood anemones display,
 Their rosy lips in bright array
 The wanton bee inviting ;
 While down the valley softly steals
 The soothing balm that kindly heals
 The wounds of winter's smiling.

The merry finch, with sapphire coat,
 From bough to bough is springing ;
 There's naught but music in his note,
 For love inspires his singing.
 The clarion of the throstle thrills
 The dingle with his calls and trills ;
 While full and deep the welcome strain
 Of "Cuckoo, cuckoo," fills the plain—
 A solo in the chorus ;
 And will we fail to join the throng,
 In Nature's universal song,
 With heaven smiling o'er us ?

A LOVE SONG.

OH, weel I mind when I was young
 An' fu' o' fun an' pleasure,
 I tuned my ever ready tongue
 To ilka glowin' measure ;
 But best o' a' the sangs I heard
 That fired my fancy fairly,
 Was lilted by a bonnie bird
 Amang the bowers o' Airly.

'Twas love, love, love,
 Oh life is dull and dreary
 Withoot its kind and couthie lowe
 To mak' it bien and cheerie.

Aroon' my heart it cast a spell
 That maistly seemed uncannie ;
 I couldna keep it to mysel',
 But vowed to sing't to Annie.
 I met her by the burnie's flow,
 'Aneath the hap o' e'enin' ;
 Yet, tho' I sang it sweet an' low,
 She couldna read the meanin'.

I sang it ower an' ower again,
An' aye wi' mair expression,
Until I saw her bosom fain
At last had learned the lesson.
And when I kissed her for my fee,
Withoot a halt or swither,
I whispered wi' a droopin' e'e,
"Let's sing it baith thegither."

An' noo through a' the changin' years
That try oor scanty mailin',
We list the music o' the spheres
Within oor humble dwellin'.
An' when the day gets unco lang,
An' keen oor spirits' hunger,
We carol ower the witchin' sang
We learned when life was younger.

Its love, love, love,
Oh life is dull and dreary
Withoot its kind an' couthie lowe
To mak' it bien an' cheerie.

THE AULD OIL MILL.

O, AFTEN hae I sung wi' pride Strathearn's bonnie braes,
 Her birken bowers and wimplin' streams that echo early
 days ;

And ever as I tune my reed I feel the witchin' spell,
 O' the mair than earthly beauty o' the Strath I love so
 well.

Yet, as amang the dreams o' youth, there's aye a some-
 thing fair

That guides the pulsings o' the heart and rests for ever
 there.

Sae, as my fancy backward turns, baith heart and e'e 'ill
 fill

As memory pictures through the mist the Auld Oil Mill.

O, the Auld Oil Mill ! the Auld Oil Mill !

Fair streamin' doon the years I see the Auld Oil Mill.


O weel I mind the happy time when Saturday cam' roun',
 Then early mornin' saw us shoot like rockets frae the
 toun ;

An', burstin' like a stream o' licht wi' music in its train,
 The haughs an' howes o' Sauchie echoed back the glad
 refrain.

An' sure as needle ever seeks the Pole wi' steady zeal,
We turned our steps unthinkin' to the music o' the wheel.
An' there we daffed an' danced, an' sang till gloamin',
sweet and still,
Whispered "hame" to ilka truant at the Auld Oil Mill.
O, the Auld Oil Mill! the Auld Oil Mill!
The day passed like a shuttle at the Auld Oil Mill.

O, ne'er were seen sic bonnie flooers as what were
bloomin' there,
An' never bonnier butterflees did fan the summer air;
I've socht in vain to paint them in the hues that memory
brings,
But mortal man could ne'er describe the colour o' their
wings.
But noo there's no a butterflee or flooret to be seen;
Or gin there be, they're black or white, and common
weeds I ween.
It may be fancy a', but O, earth ne'er again 'ill thrill
Wi' the fairy life that wantoned roun' the Auld Oil Mill.
O, the Auld Oil Mill! the Auld Oil Mill!
The fairies a' hae vanished frae the Auld Oil Mill.

But years hae gaen and left the Mill a' plaything o' the
blast,
A crumblin' wa' an' beam are a' that link the hallowed
past.



The massy stanes that wheeled us roun' hae shared the
common fate ;
Time's iron wheel had steadier rowed an' dang them oot
o' date.
An' we whose happy numbers matched the laverock's in
the lift,
Hae dree'd oor weird, an' noo are a' on life's sea cast
adrift ;
But like a distant, lanesome star, when nicht hides plain
and hill,
Upon the brow of memory gleams the Auld Oil Mill.
O, the Auld Oil Mill ! the Auld Oil Mill !
The brightest gem in memory's croon's the Auld Oil
Mill.

THE GRAND OLD GAME.

THERE'S many a tone of an early strain
 Ever floats in sweetness round us,
 And speaks to life, be it joy or pain,
 How the fadeless past hath bound us.
 And many a joy that our boyhood knew
 Still allures with charm undying,
 But our springtide glows in a brighter hue
 When the bat and ball we're plying.

Chorus—Then hold up to fame
 The grand old game
 That lifts us above care's surging billow,
 For our hearts are light
 As the sunshine bright
 When we merrily handle the witching willow.

Away, away, though the falling sheen,
 Where the lark's refrain is ringing ;
 Where crickets chirp in the smiling green,
 And the fairy flowers are springing.
 'Tis there that the pent-up toiler thrills
 To the pulse of freedom beating,
 For a bounding joy all his bosom fills
 When the bat the ball is greeting.

Chorus—Then hold up to fame, etc.

There ne'er was a merrier band than we
At our fielding, batting, bowling,
For our thoughts are pure and our actions free
As the waves of ocean rolling,
With a steady eye and a ready hand
We "cut the leather" neatly,
While we spring to the wave of pleasure's wand
And the siren singing sweetly.

Chorus—Then hold up to fame, etc.

This world of ours is a spreading field,
Where each man must score his winnings ;
But joy to some it may never yield
E'er the evening clouds their innings.
But ringing clear through the drear eclipse
(For our efforts all are blended),
May we hear "Well done" from our Captain's lips
When the final game is ended.

Chorus—Then hold up to fame
The grand old game
That lifts us above care's surging billow,
For our hearts are light
As the sunshine bright
When we merrily handle the witching willow.

LAGGAN BRAES.

THE bonnie braes o' Laggan !
 How fond my fancies turn
 To thae green hillocks i' the north,
 The pride o' a' Strathearn.
 The fairest scenes on earth to me,
 The joy o' early days ;
 For rural beauty wanders free
 On Laggan's bonnie braes.


The flowery braes o' Laggan !
 How fair to childhood's view.
 The modest primrose set in green,
 And bonnie harebell blue.
 And lightly sped the happy hours
 A-listening birdies' lays :
 For life was fu' o' birds and floers
 On Laggan's bonnie braes.

The breezy braes o' Laggan !
 There aft the laddie spied
 His kite far fleein' in the cluds
 Wi' mair than manly pride.

And o' the hunt at close o' day
For hazel nuts and slaes !
Ah, boyhood's Eldorado lay
On Laggan's bonnie braes.

The sunny braes o' Laggan !
How pure in beauty dressed,
When ilka leaf and flo'eret hings
A jewel in its breast.
And when the sun in holy trance
Withdraws frae Nature's gaze,
He ever turns his partin' glance
On Laggan's bonnie braes.

The hallowed braes o' Laggan !
Oh, could I see them noo !
The joys of youth would flood my heart
And care would flee my broo.
There's such a charm in Nature's wiles,
And pleasure in her ways,
That manhood craves again her smiles
On Laggan's bonnie braes.



THE NAMELESS LASSIE.

YESTREEN when the gloamin' was kissin' the lea,
 An' Nature was tellin' her secrets to me,
 A vision o' beauty enraptured my sight,
 An' flooded my heart wi' uncanny delight.
 The lassie was sweeter an' fairer than a',
 Tho' some may misdoot me an' ca' it a blaw ;
 But love lent his magical light to my e'e,
 To prove she was bonnie tho' nameless to me.

Her lips they were ruby, wi' pearls atween,
 An' blue shone her een 'neath their saft silken screen ;
 Her cheeks had the hue of the bonnie moss rose
 When linked wi' the lily an' set in a pose.
 The step o' a fairy, the air o' a queen,
 Her form seemed as genty as ever was seen ;
 The gouden hair waved roond her classic e'e bree—
 She's some freend o' Venus tho' nameless to me.

O, what will I dae wi' this puir heart o' mine,
 That's drunken and doited wi' love's fiery wine ?
 I ance was as busy an' brisk as a bee,
 Noo I'm dull as a drone, wi' nae hinney to pree.
 But hark ye ! I'll meet wi' this lassie again,
 For aften she walks in the gloamin' her lane ;
 An' gin what I tell her stir love in her e'e,
 She'll no lang be nameless to you nor to me.

SONG OF THE HEARTH.

How fearfully sounds the storm to-night
 As it bellows and breaks amid the plain,
 Hissing and howling in wild affright,
 And spitting in wrath on the window pane ;
 But little care I for the tempest fierce,
 As it hurtles athwart heaven's darkened dome,
 It ne'er can the calm of my spirit pierce,
 For I'm safely moored in my harbour home.

Then ho ! for the cheeriest spot on earth,
 Where love sings sweetest and care takes wing ;
 Where elysian joys have a nightly birth,
 And the flower of Hope's ever blossoming.

I'm king of a realm where lurks no foe,
 Where the bane of distrust ne'er a refuge knew,
 For I bear in my heart, where'er I go,
 The love of my subjects leal and true.
 No fiery faction's venomous creed
 With its alien breath spreads contagion round,
 But the soul of union finds its meed
 In the sunny smiles oft with laughter crowned.

Then ho ! for the merriest spot on earth,
Where love sings sweetest and care takes wing;
Where elysian joys have a nightly birth,
And the flower of Hope's ever blossoming.

With legs astraddle on fire-lit hearth
I smoke my pipe at my kingly will,
While I plunge in the soul refreshing mirth
That's born of a draught of the Muse's rill.
O, it's more than the lords of creation know,
The lofty joys of lowly lot ;
Thè gems in the crown of love that glow
Can never with tinsel show be bought.

Then ho ! for the happiest spot on earth,
Where love sings sweetest and care takes wing;
Where elysian joys have a nightly birth,
And the flower of Hope's ever blossoming.



SONG OF HOPE.

BRIGHT gems of the woodland and valley,
Frail darlings of Summer and love,
Can nothing your phalanxes rally,
When Winter has smitten the grove?

O, streamlet swift, flowing in madness,
All turbulent, wrathful, and rude ;
What charm can awaken the gladness
That echoed thy happier mood?

Ah ! well know the flowers and the streamlet,
When compassed with sorrow and strife,
That Spring's fiery banner will gleam yet,
And wake them to newness of life.

And we in our time of probation,
When the promise of hope seems a lie,
Should scan, through the night's desolation,
The far-throbbing blue of the sky.

SONG OF THE REAPERS.

ONWARD we march in the opening morn,
Strong in the hope that of love is born,
Sheathing our blades in the yielding grass,
That prostrate lies as we gaily pass.

Swathe by swathe, on our way we go,
Kindred in thought, as our labours show ;
Never a dream that the day is long,
For our hearts are stout, and our arms are strong.

Onward still, for we dare not shun
The scorching blaze of the noontide sun ;
Dreaming of peace, and the smile that lies
On the lips of love, when the daylight dies.

Rest we our blades, for the western sun
Speaks to our bosoms of duty done ;
And a calm descends on the weary breast
That seeks repose at the dawn of rest.



SONG.

AROUN' Benchonzie's purple crest
 The sun's last ray is clingin',
 The burnie sabs its sel' to rest
 Aneath the hazels hingin'!
 The swallows left the westlin' licht
 When Nature's e'e grew weary :
 O, why are ye sae late the nicht,
 My only joy an' dearie ?

Deep in the dell the woodland dove
 Its dreary note is hummin',
 The passin' zephyrs sing o' love,
 And whisper o' your comin' ;
 But till your fairy form I see
 I canna be but eerie,
 For thou art a' the world to me,
 My only joy an' dearie.

I mark the starnies up on hie,
 That angel hands are guidin',
 Wi' but a dull an' heedless e'e,
 For love kens nae dividin' ;

The music of your voice alane
This nicht can mak' me cheerie ;
Then haste and lift this gnawin' pain,
My only joy an' dearie.

WHAUR SHAGGIE SINGS.

ADOON the dell whaur Shaggie sings
 Its wimplin' winnin' melody :
 Whaur wagtails skip on wanton wings
 And keep perpetual holiday !
 Whaur water-bobbies jauntin'ly
 Bow to their shadows in the stream,
 There would my fancy ever be
 To share the poet's golden dream.

The warbler through the bracken glides
 An' wriggles chatterin' on the spray ;
 While ilka spreadin' hazel hides
 A lintie at his e'ening lay,
 Fair as when Nature's natal day
 Swept o'er the earth on dewy wings,
 Are daisied nooks and arbours gay
 Whaur lovers meet and Shaggie sings.

There first the throstle's maiden hymn
 Wells freely frae his mirly breast ;
 The shilfa seeks the forkit stem
 To big his cosy mossy nest ;

The restless wren wi' gowden crest
Plays gymnast on the birken tree,
Till bluebells toll them a' to rest
'Neath Shaggie's leafy canopy.

O, earth has mony a fair domain
To charm the wanderer's lingerin' e'e,
But nane can fire this bosom fain
Like what this sunny spot can dae ;
Like ivy roond the aiken tree,
My tendril fancy ever clings
To what will ever be to me
Earth's Paradise, whaur Shaggie sings.



O FIERCELY THE STORM.

O FIERCELY the storm down Glenturret is howling,
 Dark hover the clouds o'er the brow of the hill :
 Resistless and deep Turret's waters are rolling
 Where lately they rippled an eddying rill.
 The trees toss and moan on the moorland deserted,
 The flowers lie seared by the hurricane's breath ;
 The beauty and bloom of the earth has departed,
 And winter reigns rampant 'mong ruin and death.

But heaven again will descend through the cloudland,
 The snowdrop and daisy in beauty be born ;
 The primrose will star every glade in the woodland,
 And bluebells will dance to the piping of morn,
 And deep in hearts weary Hope's flower is springing,
 Though crusted with sorrow or sodden with tears,
 'Twill burst from its prison to Faith's standard clinging,
 And bloom in the light of eternity's years.

THE WEE FLO'ER.

AË cauld blasty mornin' a bonnie wee flo'er
 Hung its head unco dowie, forfochen wi' pain,
 Yet aften 'twad break frae the dounhaudin' po'er,
 Lift its tear-drookit face to be smitten again.
 Sae it focht wi' its fae thro' the lang dreary day,
 Till the pityfu' sun turned its gloom into sheen,
 When the flo'er fu' o' glee, thanked its freen' up on hie,
 And its face shone wi' smiles till it steekit its e'en.

Noo I've thocht that oor life's like that bonnie wee flo'er,
 Just a mark for Fate's shafts without guidance or biel,
 An' oor heads aften crushed 'mong the weet an' the stoor,
 By the alien touch o' adversity's heel;
 But hoo seldom, alas, do we ever surpass
 The courage and patience the flo'eret displays;
 Could we when we're doon ever look up aboon,
 Joy's beams would illumine the end o' oor days.




JAMIE'S AWA'.

Noo simmer has vanished an' Nature is frownin',
 Her sweet flowery vesture is covered wi' snaw;
 The prospect is dreary, my heart is aweary,
 Nae mair I'll be lichtsome,—my Jamie's awa'.

Oft Fancy wi' a' her allurements rehearses,
 That hour which can ne'er be forgotten by me;
 When blithsome an' cheerie, he ca'd me his dearie,
 The joy o' his life an' the licht o' his e'e.

The swallows were skimmin' along on the water,
 The mavis was singin' his sang in the grove;
 An' robin sat watchin', impatient on catchin',
 Ilk word that made up the sweet tale o' oor love.

Yon big gnarled chestnut, noo leafless and naked,
 Wi' his arms extended sae waesome to see,
 Ance blossomed an' flourished, while 'neath it was
 nourished,
 A love that will last till the day that I dee.



But why should I dwell on thae sweet happy moments?
It ne'er can bring back my dear laddie to me ;
For quietly he's sleepin', whar willows are weepin',
An' whar this poor weary hert's langin' to be.

An' what though the bloom frae my cheek be departin'
An' care busy makin' his bed in my broo ;
My future's abidin', whar Jamie's residin',
In the land whar each withered heart blossoms anew.




DO THE BEST YOU CAN.

COMRADES on the field of battle,
Partners in the strife,
While the arrows round you hurtle,
And the foe is rife,
Never let the siren Beauty
Swamp the stalwart man ;
Strike for honour, right and duty—
Do the best you can.

Often will the foe assail you
With alluring smiles ;
Naught but courage can avail you
To withstand his wiles.
Let the pure and bright endeavour
Guide your every plan,
Never from your purpose waver—
Do the best you can.

Should despair invade your bosom
Hand in hand with care,
Root them ere their baneful blossom
Spread destruction there.



Darkest clouds have silver lining
Could we thro' them scan ;
Scorn the evil of repining—
Do the best you can.

Steady aye when Fate's rude whirling
Would thy bark o'erwhelm,
Naught can trouble you, if sterling
Faith be at the helm.
Bear in mind, when tempest driven,
This is Wisdom's plan,
With your anchor fixed in heaven—
Do the best you can.



MY OWN NATIVE VALE.

To far lands of pleasure the worldling may roam,
 Forgetful of sweeter enjoyments at home ;
 Or haply with sordid allurements may dwell,
 And find in the glitter of mammon a spell.
 To me life is sweeter when passed 'mid the scenes,
 Where passion first wakened and fancy now gleans,
 And joy like a seraph bestrides ilka gale,
 That sweeps wild and free thro' my own native vale.

O, blue are the hills that encircle the spot,
 Where youth's ardour glowed e'er 'twas shadowed by
 thought ;
 And green, O sae green are the wood in their pride,
 Where naught but the essence of beauty can bide.
 Away from Art's fashions, its glitter and glare,
 Sweet nature has founded a paradise there ;
 On her breast shines the bluebell and primrose so pale,
 As she reigns beauty's queen in my own native vale.

O lend me Hope's pinions for fain would I stand
 In the shadow of Turleum all solemn and grand,
 Where the clear crystal burnie winds wimplin' in glee,
 Thro' groves that aince curtained my lassie and me.

The fa' o' the fountain, the coo o' the dove,
Are voices that waken long slumbering love ;
And O, so bewitchin', the lintie's love tale,
'Mong the gowden whin bloom of my own native vale.

O earth's bowers are bonnie wherever you turn,
But dearer than ony is bonnie Strathearn !
Ye may build up a name on the world's esteem,
Yet a blink o' your youth will out-dazzle its gleam.
Misfortune's dark cloud o'er my pathway may loom,
Still a ray of life's dawn will keep piercing the gloom ;
E'en the stern reiver Death to appal me will fail,
Should he keep his grim tryst in my own native vale.

WHEN DAY'S GAUDY MONARCH.

WHEN day's gaudy monarch is softly retreating
 O'er mountains whose tops still partake of his glow ;
 When far on the upland the lambkin's long bleating
 Is answered by love from the valley below ;
 When Nature responds to the summons of gloaming,
 To weave o'er the landscape a beauty divine,
 O meet me, my love, where the cascade is foaming,
 Where my heart's fond emotions may mingle with thine.

No breath of distrust can ere darken our feelings—
 Pure, pure will the stream of our intercourse be,
 And then thou shalt know from a true heart's revealings,
 Of a love that alone finds its dwelling in thee.
 The sharp bitter taunt of the town cannot wound us ;
 Afar from its tumult we'll rest all serene ;
 While evening will throw her dark mantle around us,
 And the glow of our love will enlighten the scene.

Then meet me, O meet me, thou joy of my being ;
 Blythe Nature alone rivals thee in my heart ;
 She smiles, and my heart then is instantly seeking
 The raptures thy presence alone can impart.

The proud and the wealthy their revels may cherish ;
From poverty's terrors their lives may be free ;
But all their mock gaities instantly perish
When matched with the pleasure of meeting with thee.



THE WATER-BOBBIE.

A Sang for the Bairns.

SEE the jolly water-craw,
 A happy bird is he,
 Wi' a collar roond his neck
 As white as white can be.
 Curtsyin' to his ain face
 In the burnie's sheen ;
 O but he's a vain bird,
 Vainer ne'er was seen.
 Water-bobbie ! Water-bobbie !
 Little roguish loon,
 Singin' oot your wee heart
 Whar the waters croon.

Doon an' ower the damhead
 Like a shot he's gane,
 Noo he's at his auld tricks
 Bobbin' on a stane.
 Wi' a splash he's ower the head,
 Will he soom or sink ?
 Hah ! he's up an' oot again
 Bobbin' on the brink.

Water-bobbie ! Water-bobbie .

You're a happy loon,
Playin' a' the summer day
Whar the waters croon.

Noo he's aff an' thro' the wood

Whar the floories bloom,
Naething but a spot o' white
Wanderin' thro' the gloom.
Roond about the millwheel

Ne'er a blink at rest,
But he has an errand there
To his cosy nest.

Water-bobbie ! Water-bobbie !

Little cunnin' loon,
Croslin' near your ain mate
Whar the waters croon.

BONNIE KELTIE SIDE.

Noo wintry days are over,
 Wi' a' their frost an' snaw,
 An' Nature's pulse is throbbin' fain
 Adoon the birken shaw.
 The blackbird sings his lovin' vows
 To woo his dusky bride ;
 An' sae would I, my only joy,
 By bonnie Keltie side ;
 Fain would I sing of love an' thee
 By bonnie Keltie side.

Come when the mornin' glory
 Decks a' in gouden cheer,
 An' I will pu', to crown your broo,
 The firstlings o' the year.
 Earth's fairest gems are bloomin' there
 In a' their dewy pride ;
 But love is aye the sweetest flooer
 By bonnie Keltie side ;
 Ay, sweetly blooms the flooer o' love
 By bonnie Keltie side.

The wanton winds are laden
Wi' stores o' stolen bliss ;
The bonnie bluebell reels wi' joy
Aneath the dewdrop's kiss ;
The wild bee prees the hinny lips
O' floorets far an' wide ;
But sweeter far your rosy mou'
By bonnie Keltie side ;
Ay, sweet's the tender kiss o' love
By bonnie Keltie side.

O, star of love an' beauty,
Hope of my life to be,
Where'er thy tender beauty beams
Is all the world to me.
Yet fain would I thy sweetness prove,
Where truth an' peace abide,
For true's the heart that waits thy love
By bonnie Keltie side ;
Ay, true's the love that welcomes thee
By bonnie Keltie side.



Poems.



THE KNOCK OF CRIEFF.

STRATHEARN ! sweet valley of historic lay,
Beauteous as Eden at departing day,
What sweet enchantments to thy name belong
When memory wakes the witchery of song !
In thy fair breast is all that man would know
Of Nature's passion in its purest glow ;
Oft have thy lovers in departed days
Made thee the subject of their matchless lays ;
And I, the humblest of the tuneful race,
Have sung thy beauty with untutored grace.
Not mine the power to sing in classic strains,
Thy rippling rivers and thy spreading plains,
But lowly lisp, devoid of Attic art,
The simple promptings of my ravished heart.
Youth wantoned gaily 'mong thy fragrant bowers,
Companioned only by the birds and flowers,
And manhood fain would feel the simple joy
That filled the bosom of the careless boy.
Yet holier seems the joy of later years,
As pensive thought each cherished scene endears !
And standing here above thy smiling plain
I drop life's fetters with their galling pain,

And on the wings of Fancy soar above
The sordid cares that round my pathway move.

Hail ! rising height with smiling verdure crowned,
The pride of Crieff and joy of all around ;
Thou art the same in Nature's joy or wrath,
The crowning glory of the spreading Strath.
Parnassus-like thy noble front appears,
Dowered with the beauty of the faded years ;
From thy high brow my ravished eyes command
The fairest prospect of my native land ;
And swift as thought survey each classic scene,
Mapped out in beauty in the vale serene.
And now they rest with joy and conscious pride,
Where Earn rolls proudly in a crystal tide
Through sylvan groves and woodlands towering bold,
And corn fields waving in their autumn gold.
Afar among the hills his numbers wake,
From soothing bondage of his parent lake ;
And stretching out in volume clear and strong,
Proclaims his freedom in a burst of song.
When first the path of purity he took,
And all the stillness of the hills forsook,
'Twas fairy wisdom all his journey planned,
And traced his wanderings through the virgin land.
No fairer scenes can sunnier lands disclose
Than these through which his mazy current flows,




Around his source the furrowed mountains stand
Like guardians stern, majestically grand,
Till, having nursed him to a river's tide,
They leave him all alone his way to glide
Through woodlands waving in their mantle green,
And birch bowers flashing in their silver sheen ;
Where fairy flowrets, wanton in their joy,
Steal luscious kisses as he wanders by.
All that is fair seems gathered to his side,
Like beauty near to purity allied.

Let greater bards of greater rivers sing
Their pulsing couplets while the echoes ring ;
Let Royal Thames his majesty attest.
While rock the nations' navies on his breast—
The stream to which old England's poets clung,
Whose praises Pope and classic Spencer sung ;
Let border Tweed roll on in sullen flood,
His murmuring numbers echoing tales of blood ;
Let " Bonnie Doon " and Yarrow's fated stream
Echo the passion of a poet's dream ;
Their fame will linger while their song is heard
In soothing nature or accompanying bird.
Like innocence by simple nature taught,
Reflecting beauty in its every thought.
Thy happy heart from clouding care is free,
Thy life one stretch of rippling purity.
O, winding stream ! whose merry tinkling rhyme
Lends soothing progress to the feet of Time,

The years roll onward and the seasons fade,
And man seeks rest, all battered and decayed,
But thou dost wander all unchanged and free,
Unconscious all of man's mortality.
Pure as when first from chaos thou didst flow
A filtered fountain of transparent glow ;
Ere thy breast quivered with the dream of Spring,
And the first pebble made thy heart to sing.
O ! could my life flow peacefully like thine,
Reflecting Heaven's serenity, and shine,
No surging troubles would my dream molest,
While Heaven's bright blue dwelt ever in my breast.
Alternate joy and grief my bosom rule,
My joy a ripple, and my grief a pool.
Pure as thy source did mortals' life begin
To flow in beauty till defiled by sin,
Yet all its wanderings in crooked ways
The eye of Heaven with tender look surveys,
And marks the heavings of its turgid roll,
With deep compassion for its tainted soul ;
And yet at last, all full and pure like thee,
'Twill meet the ocean of eternity.


Next comes to view a glow in morning's fire,
The wooded braes of classic Ochertyre,
With smiling nature as a constant guest,
In verdant robes, unfading, are they dressed.



With all their harmony of birds and flowers
The mind compares the wealth of Eden's bowers,
And feels that in this paradise of rest
Man must be happy, and perchance be blest.
No glaring threats of penalties annoy
The poet's rapture or the tourist's joy,
But free and fearless as the wandering breeze
That sings a welcome in the leafy trees,
He roves enchanted under smiling skies,
And feeds his soul on Nature's mysteries.

The wood-encircled lake lies still at rest,
A world of sleeping beauty in its breast,
Where oft as evening lingers in the sky
The boats sail gaily as the oarsmen ply
Their measured stroke to merriment and song,
While laughing echoes all the joys prolong.

How Fancy loves to spread her lightning wing !
From this dear spot the vanished past to bring
In all its spotless purity arrayed,
And witching love ensnaring youth and maid.
The halo of romance its beauty throws
Around this smiling lake, and fondly glows
In exiled hearts that early knew its charm,
When hope was beaming and the heart was warm.
Now, far amid the world's ignoble ways
They live again the joy of early days,
And first of all their longings would desire
Thy charm again, sweet Loch of Ochertyre.



High on a plateau of the rising ground
The mansion stands with beauty hedged around,
Where, circled with affection's loving spells,
BENEVOLENCE in peace and plenty dwells.
Here can we find a presence to be loved,
A heaven-lit soul by lengthened bounties proved ;
A heart o'erflowing with the wine of love,
Bestowing what he borrowed from above ;
Long shall he live in grateful hearts that feel
His gentle influence round their pathway steal.
The virtues of the father guide the son,
And prompt the triumphs that his life hath won ;
While gentle deeds will, 'midst the blaze of fame,
Keep green the memory of a Murray's name.

A form of beauty fills my dreaming eye
With Song's immortal master standing by.
Fair as the beauty of the rising morn,
And gay as bird that sings upon the thorn,
Was she who made the poet's fancy flow
In all the fulness of his passion's glow.
Here have his soul-lit eyes in transport roved
O'er Nature's page, and here his heart was moved
To sing one gem * that all the world has caught,
Set in the golden glory of his thought.

* "Blithe, blithe, and merry was she."

Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, "The Flower of Strathmore," was the heroine of this song. Burns met her when on a visit to Sir William Murray at Ochtertyre.



His presence seems to fill the whispering wood,
And lends a rapture to its solitude !
Glenturret slumbers, dreaming of his name,
The mountains echo his enduring fame.
All Nature still continues to adore
The soul that sang "The Flower of Strathmore."

ODE TO A THRUSH.

ONCE more I strike my long neglected lyre
 That long hath slumbered on the waste of time ;
 Come, Muses, lend my soul poetic fire,
 Again to revel in the realms of rhyme.
 Though Winter's icy hand still grasps the grove,
 And bold Benchonzie shivers in his shroud,
 Yet Nature's darling singer is abroad,
 And wakes the land to love,
 While echo answers with his clarion loud
 From the unbroken stillness of the wood.

Hail, mottled songster ! pioneer of Spring ;
 Thy pristine notes spread rapture through my soul.
 I list thy vocal utterings and fling
 My waking cares aside and grasp the whole
 Ethereal joyance influenced by thee ;
 For thou dost dream of Summer's melting bliss,
 Though all around thy couch be bleak and bare,
 And naked every tree ;
 Yet piping prophet of the numberless,
 Green Nature travails round thee everywhere.

I see from where I stand thy rounded form,
A tiny speck against the skyline clear ;
Swayed by the "viewless minstrels" of the storm
That bear thy song full-throated to my ear.
And as I list thee, boyhood's passion breaks
Athwart my mature manhood passionless,
Revolving in my memory the joys
Of youth when love awakes,
Tasting again the spring of happiness
Which life's habitual sophistry destroys.

O ! could I sing with thee when human strife
Lies all around with honey-blossoms few,
Forget the mortal ills of mortal life
Which thou in Nature's garden never knew.
Ambition never with its darkling flights
Disturbs the tranquil beatings in thy breast ;
Thy tuneful gift to Nature all thy care,
The dream of all thy nights,
Until connubial promptings thee invest,
And love bids thee thy mossy home prepare.

No gentle flow'rets yet bedeck the green,
Nor paint the woodlands with their motley dyes,
Save the lone snowdrop's unassuming sheen,
Or the saffron primrose with its starry eyes ;
They peer from under desolation's path,
As if in mockery of Winter's reign ;

Safe in the shelter of some wooded grove
From blighting Boreas' wrath
They bloom, the harbingers of Flora's train,
And nod their praises to thy lay of love.

When throbbing spring melts into summer's calm
Thy song will widen to an anthem's swell,
Powerful and stirring, holy as a psalm
That chains the feelings in its magic spell.
O, for that sunny season of delight
When travelling down the glade the eye beholds
Thy pinions glistening in the solar beam
That threads the woodland bright ;
When the full choristry of the bracken holds
The heart spell-bound like fancies in a dream.

Sing on, thou winged nymph of Nature's bowers,
The heart gets younger at thy roundelay ;
As summer sun disperses misty showers,
So does thy song chase pensive gloom away.
Beneath thy lofty perch the Earn sings,
Her tuneful numbers blending with thine own,
While Nature's smileless face is imaged bright
'Tween sportive eddyings
That swirl the relics of a season down
Where bright mosaic beauties woo the sight.

But thou art fled, and happiness in truth
Has gone with thee who lethargy defies ;
I see thee seek "the thicket" of my youth
In sweet Broichmore where verdure never dies.
Is thy young mate embowered in its shade,
Impatient of her tuneful lord's return ?
Then charmer thence the secret of that lay
Whose thrilling beauty made
My pulses quicken and my bosom burn,
And which will live when much has passed away.

RONALD'S WRAITH.

A Ballad.

SIR JOHN, a knight o' the North Countrie,
 Had ordered a feast when the day was done,
 And mony a lord and lady were there,
 And a' in honour o' Ronald his son.

The feast was spread in the stately ha',
 The guests sat a' roond the foamin' cheer,
 And merry and light were the hearts o' a';
 But nocht o' Ronald did ere appear.

Then up and spoke the bold Sir John,
 As he looked aroond wi' a lowerin' e'e,
 "Why tarries the step o' my gallant son
 Frae this gay and noble companie?"

Then up and spoke young Ronald's nurse,
 As she looked at the Knight wi' a waefu' stare:
 "Yer son lies low 'mong the frozen furze,
 An' the nicht winds play wi' his yellow hair.



" I saw him gang oot when the bluid-red moon
Sent its first cauld glimmer the mirk glen through,
An' fey was the look o' his bonnie een,
An' the finger o' death lay cauld on his broo."

" Out ravin' witch! frae my sight be gone !
An' mak' to the winds your unearthly maen ;
Wha daur wad harm my ae braw son—
The joy o' my heart an' the pride o' the glen.

" Fill up, fill up, my merry freends a',
And pledge me his health in a flowin' cup ;
Fu' soon will ye hear his step in the ha',
Sae fill ye a bumper an' drink it up."

" Sir John ! Sir John ! wad ye drink to the dead ?
Wad ye pledge him a health that's nae langer here ?
I tell ye yer laddie's spirit has fled,
Frae its dwellin' o' clay to anither sphere.

" I saw him this nicht wi' prophetic sicht,
An' fast ran the bluid frae his mangled broo,
As he lay by the side o' his bonnie young bride,
Baith slain by his rival, the Black Glendhu.

" Ochon a rie ! my bonnie brave boy,
Cut doon like a flooer in thy stately pride ;
But cursed be the hand that did thee destroy,
An' blasted his name thro' the country wide."

She ceased, for close to the empty chair
 Stood Ronald, and ower him the veil o' death.
The guests sat a' in a frozen fear,
 And, shuddering, whispered "A wraith! a wraith!"

Oh, pale grew the Knight in the lamp's dim light,
 As he sprang, and cried "My son! my son!"
But his arms were pressed to an empty breast—
 He looked, but the loved one's form was gone.

They searched thro' the glen the lee lang nicht,
 By the silent rock and the singin' stream ;
But nocht was seen in the mune's wan licht,
 An' nocht was heard but the howlet's scream.

When rosy and red grew the dark cloud's rim,
 An' the fause mune fled frae avenging morn,
Young Ronald they found by the greenwood dim,
 An' near him in death lay the fair May Thorne.

And they hae buried the lovers twa
 In the dreamy valley side by side ;
And aften the tears o' pity fa'
 For the hapless bridegroom an' his bride.




LUCY GREY.

THE God of Day, in glory all his own,
 Leapt from the weary womb of night, and shed
 His radiance o'er the fair expectant earth,
 Which glowed and glistened in the morning beam,
 Ordering all her parasites to greet
 The fiery king that climbed the golden east,
 And all her vocal votaries to swell
 The eternal hymn of constancy and love.
 The ever-thrilling and melodious lark
 Cleaved space in bounds to carol in the heavens ;
 The mavis piped his loud, full throated song,
 And mocked his brother songsters in the grove.
 The lowing kine, driven onward to the meads,
 Proclaimed the farmer's labour had begun ;
 The blooming hedgerows wiped away their tears,
 And cast fresh fragrance on the passing wind :
 All Nature seemed a bower of fairy bliss,
 And basked resplendent in the early morn.
 This morning broke o'er lofty Castle Grey,
 And woke its inmates from a sweet repose ;
 A maiden fair merged from the spacious hall,
 And lightly tripped across the dewy lawn.

She crossed the river, which with music sweet
Wound wimpling through a fairy sylvan scene,
Until at last with many a laugh it lost
Its murmuring numbers in the bay's embrace ;
So like to her that tripped along in joy,
Till clasped at last to her dear lover's heart.

The stately towers of Castle Grey reposed
Against a dark green ground of ancient elms,
Where dwelt Sir Henry in his lofty pride—
The feudal lord of all the wide domain.
Austere he was, a many-mooded soul ;
Severe of thought, unswerving from his wish.
In early life he woo'd and won the fair
Young Constance Clare, the beauty of the vale ;
But like the lily 'neath the Boreas blast,
She drooped and died, bequeathing to her lord
The counterpart of her he lost for aye.

Fair Lucy Grey ! how vain were the attempt
To paint her beauty with a mortal hand ;
She stood alone, as stood the matchless form
Of her the first of hapless womanhood.
The light that shone from out her hazel eyes
Broke on the soul and woke the pangs of love ;
Her face revealed the sweetness of her heart,
And sweet simplicity circled all her ways.
Her budding life was cherished by the young
John Mortimer, a cousin of her own,



Sir Henry's nephew, and his sister's son.
In him Sir Henry saw the future lord
Of Castle Grey and all adjacent lands ;
And long the dream he fondled in his heart,
To see the cousins wedded ere he died.
John long had loved the gentle Lucy Grey
With the sordid passion of a servile mind,
And sought to stem the current of her will ;
But her young heart had fled its parent home,
And found a refuge in another's breast.

One lovely day in flowery summer's reign,
Fair Lucy bent her footsteps to the fields
To gather flowers scarce, fairer than herself ;
To grace the table in her castle home.
While thus she strayed across the flowery mead,
A bull half maddened by the stinging gnats,
With lowering front, and heavy bellowing roar,
Bore down upon her. Noticing her plight,
An artist who was sketching near at hand
Threw art aside and hastened to her aid.
He drew the brute's attention to himself,
And saved her life at peril of his own.
And thus they met, two hearts whose mutual love
Beamed eloquent from their tale-telling eyes.
They met again, and yet again they met,
For who can still the plunging of the heart,
Or check the speed of fancy's airy flight ?

As stars to night, so love to mortals is,
And shines more radiant in life's darkest hour.
Love is the sweetest flower on all the earth,
And blooms perennial on a chequered waste ;
The storms of fate may bow it to the earth,
But cannot blast its constancy of bloom.
So Lucy felt her life filled up at last,
And seemed to live for happy love alone ;
And Philip Brooks, to him a new life dawned
Of sunny splendour peopled with delight.
Before that heavenly ray had crossed his path,
His art was all the mistress ere he knew.
The ideal beauties which his pencil drew
Had charmed the world's all-criticising eye ;
Yet their completeness never could approach
The angel-sweetness of his Lucy's face.

Entranced beside the river's eddying flow,
In the broken shadow of a chestnut tree
Sat Lucy Grey. A robin perched above
Eyed her askance, then flew down at her feet,
Picked up a grub, and hastened back again.
The twittering swallows skimmed the river's brim,
And waged a warfare on the dancing flies ;
The ceaseless hum of insects on the wing
Seemed strangely sweet joined with the song of birds :
And Lucy's heart leapt forth exultingly
To join the medley of a summer's day.

But soon a footfall struck her startled ear,
Which made her blood all gather in her face ;
A moment more and her excited heart
Is clasped to Philip's in a dear embrace.
But their's was doomed to be a passing joy,
For Hate oft wanders in the train of Love.
Another footfall struck on Lucy's ear,
And her eyes sank earthward at her cousin's gaze ;
For on his brow the gathered powers of hate
Loomed o'er his eyes, where blazed the fire of scorn,—
One withering look he cast upon the pair,
Then swiftly turned his steps to Castle Grey.

Oh ! strangely sad, and full of hidden fear
Was the lovers' parting on the river's bank ;
A shadow seemed to lie upon their thoughts,
Cast from the substance of a nameless dread,
Which hovered o'er their hearts where lately beamed
The soft effulgence of expectant joy.
Though each confessed an apathy of mind,
Yet neither knew their lips would meet no more
In love's collision, nor their speaking eyes
Rehearse the language that their lips refused.
No more would they, with mutual love elate,
Tread on the heels of early morn, nor brush
Aside the perils that garnished Nature's floor.
Often had Nature in her morning garb
Been photographed upon the lovers' hearts ;

And she would smile again in all her wealth
And beauty bright to charm her worshippers ;
But not to them. Her sunny moods would pass
Unheeded all by their young widowed hearts.

Night spread her dismal pall upon the earth,
And wrapt the towers of Castle Grey in gloom ;
An infant moon hung o'er the horizon's brow,
Which threw a weird appearance o'er the scene.
The impatient hound bayed from the kennel keep,
And woke the slumbering echoes on the hill ;
While now and then a night bird cleaved the air
With sailing flight to grasp its sleeping prey.
Like man who, bent on deeds that steel the heart,
Seeks night to veil the action of his hand,
With flying speed a man seeks Castle Grey,
From off the bridge that spans the river's flow.
His eyes are gleaming with a fiendish glare,
And his body shakes with a coward fear ;
His hands are smeared with blood, and to his face
In many spots the crimson hue has sped.
In this grim state the hall at last he finds,
And swiftly seeks the lighted library,
Where Lucy sat alone. He saw her not,
But paced the room with quick impatient step.
A ring he knew not that he harboured fell
From out his breast, and circled on the floor
Near Lucy's feet. She stooped and picked it up,

Then staggered back with face as white as death :
The ring all covered o'er with jellied blood
Was Philip's. Then with sudden fear she screamed—
"You've murdered him," and grasped him by the arm.
He shook her off, and with an oath exclaimed—
"He crossed my path," and swiftly fled the room.
Then rose upon the night of silent gloom
The melancholy wail of a broken heart,
And all who heard that cry in Castle Grey
Felt all their blood grow stagnant in their veins.
They found her lying on the oaken floor,
Her right hand pressed 'gainst her silent heart,
Grasping the ring that told the fatal tale
Of love's extinction through a cousin's knife.
So fair in life as beautiful in death,
She lay from all life's tribulations free,
And restless memory ponders o'er her fate,
And pondering fills the heart with pity's tears.

MARY—A BALLAD.

It was a maiden o' stately mien
 That lived in her father's ha',
 And mony a fair dame graced the land,
 But Mary was queen o' them a'.

Her een had the holy hue o' heaven
 When the nicht wi' stars is clear ;
 And the winnin' tones o' her gentle voice
 Had the soond o' waters near.

O, a sweeter floer ne'er bloomed I ween
 Thro' the breadth o' her ain countrie ;
 Yet she steekit her hert to the gallants a'
 That were caught in her glamourie.

But there cam' a youth frae a far-off toon
 To teach her brithers twa,
 An' he scarce a month in the house had been
 When her hert he had stown awa'.

And Willie he was a buirdly chield,
 Tho' come o' low degree ;
 And he wisely socht to smother the love
 That wad fain frae his hert be free.

An' aye they met an' aye they sang
In mony a companie ;
Yet every beat o' their separate herts
Was a cry for sympathie.

And Mary's gaen to the gay greenwood
When the sun lowed red in the West,
To dream o' the strange bewilderin' joy
That was fillin' a' her breast.

An' aye she liltit, an' aye she sang,
While the merle sat dumb on the pine,
"O, blithe is my hert, but 'twad blither be
Gin I kent his love was mine.

"O, whar's the joy in a routh o' gear,
If it canna true love gie ;
Had I the keepin' o' Willie's hert
I wad laugh at pedigree.

"Sing on, sing on thou merry merle,
Nor quat your singin' for me,
For ilka note frae your swellin' throat
Speaks o' love that canna dee."

She's turned her roond and roond about
Doon in the gay greenwood,
An' the blood it mantled her cheek and broo,
For Willie close by her stood,

An' he's taen her by the lily hand
Whaur the fern in the burnie dips,
An' loot the stream o' pent up love
Burst wildy frae his lips.


"O Mary, Mary! I hae lo'ed ye weel
This mony a weary week,
But mindin' aye o' my low degree
That love I couldna speak.

"O hoo could I dare to lift to you
The een o' a beggar loon?
But gin I were king o' fair Scotland
I wad lay at your feet its croon.

"O what a heavenly licht is that
Floodin' a' your droopin' e'e?
Does the changin' hue on your cheek an' broo
Come there for love o' me?

"Then a happy man am I this nicht,
Yet a happier I wad be
Were it no for your faither an' mither's wrath,
That I'm fear'd you'll hae to dree.

"We maun keep oor love a secret a'
Till position I command,
Then before the world an' a' your kin
I will claim your lily hand."



They pairtit wi' mony a lovin' vow
When the mune keekit ower the hill,
An' only the burnie sang o' their troth,
For the love-sick merle was still.

Sweet Mary sits in her fairy bower
Wi' a sair an' heavy hert,
For her lover far in Edinboro' toon
Is playin' the truant's pairt.

The rose has dwined in her sunken cheek
And left but the lily spare ;
Her een, that rivalled the hue o' heaven,
Are leaden wi' grief an' care.

"Alas !" she sighed, "nae mair to me
Can the e'enin' pleasure bring,
Or the sang o' the merle thro' the whisperin' leaves
Wi love's sweet pleasure ring.

O, fortune's smile is the bane o' love,
Ambition its deadly fae ;
For the glitter o' gear an' the smile o' the great
Ha'e weaned my love frae me.

Wha drinks o' the witchin' cup o' love
The consequence maun dree,
An' love was the life o' my young hert,
An' it'll be the death o' me."

Well may ye weep in dark despair,
Thou fickle thoughtless man !
Remorse will eat thy peace awa',
An' mak' thy life a ban.

The floer that wantoned i' the morn
An' smiled in sunny glee,
Afore the e'enin', drooped and dee'd—
An' a' for love o' thee.




AUTUMN SUNRISE IN STRATHEARN.

Lo ! like a god in panoply of light
 The sun bursts from the thraldom of the east,
 Leveling his quivering lances at the breast
 Of the weird phalanxes of hostile night,
 And piercing the shadowy robe of gossamer
 That wraps the woodland sentry, the gaunt fir.
 Nature, reclining in her bowers forlorn,
 Awakes, and owns the majesty of morn ;
 From east to west, from Knock to Turleum clear,
 The Strath is bathed in golden atmosphere.
 The grain gleams yellow on each Autumn field—
 Gold bands emblazoned on a verdant shield ;
 Flashing, the hero's monument is seen,
 A sword of silver from its hilt of green ;
 The wooded uplands glow in reddening hues,
 All fresh and lustrous with the morning dew.
 The Grampians smile amid their wealth unrolled,
 The purple mingling with the brown and gold ;
 And bold Benchonzie, furrowed deep with age,
 Unbends his haughty visage to engage
 The young-eyed morn, whose broad and cheering
 glow

Dispels the mists of darkness from his brow.
While over all this wondrous alchemy,
Like gold-fringed islands in an opal sea,
The airy clouds repose, drunk with delight
At day's glad triumph o'er the shades of night.
From yon low copse that skirts the Earn is heard
The first faint twitter of the early bird ;
The echo stirs the slumbering feathered throng,
And robin wakes to solitary song.

And now along the vale, in twos and threes,
Their merry carols floating on the breeze,
The lusty reapers gather to their toil,
With purpose brave to reap the harvest spoil ;
And as they bend among the golden corn,
A mutual rapture in their hearts is born,
Joyful that night's weird sighing silences
Have died amid the morning's harmonies.

Could living mortal scan the varied dyes
That robbed the woods of vanished Paradise,
The scene were not more beautiful, the bliss
No more enchanting, than the charm of this—
The fairy realm of Nature's loveliness.



THE LINTWHITE'S NEST

LEAVE off those musty tomes awhile,
 That fill the mind with sordid dreams,
 And come with me, and cross the style
 That severs art from Nature's beams.

I'll show thee more entrancing scenes
 Than idle fancy ever drew,
 Where 'neath the woodland's rifted screens
 The sunbeams play among the dew.

Just where the brooklet breaks away
 From silent raptures 'mong the flowers,
 To waken with its song and spray
 The drooping wildlings of the bowers,

A rosebush paints the dingle fair,
 With pink-white blossoms gaily crowned,
 And throws its fretted shadow where
 The tiny lintwhite's hopes are bound.

Walk lightly ! one unguarded step
 Would rob the coming year of song,
 And me of all the sunny hope
 I've guarded jealously so long.

I fain would mark the fledglings try
Their meagre wings in measured flight ;
And list the parent's tender cry
When aught of danger filled their sight.


You scarce would hope to find amid
The grass, a feathered fairy's home ;
Yet there it lies securely hid,
Save only for its foggy dome.

Stoop if you would the inside view,
'Tis wholly lined with eider down,
With six small eggs of whitish hue
All dusted o'er with ruddy brown.

From morn to morn with eager feet,
I follow where my fancy flies,
For Nature in this loved retreat
Reveals to me her mysteries.

Fame beckons you with pallid looks,
Philosophy your soul allures ;
I love the birds, the bowers, the brooks,
Nor would I change my creed for yours.

Where 'mid the realms of subtle thought
Could art discover gems like these,
That sparkle when the sun has caught
Their dewy freshness on the trees.



Away from all the world's unrest,
Its glittering pomp and gaudy toys,
I'd lay my head on Nature's breast,
And deem it best of earthly joys.

HYMN TO MORNING.

(In the manner of Collins.)

ALL dank and dreary lies the pensive vale,
Lulled to a false repose by alien winds,
Till thy benign approach
Strikes passion thro' its veins.

As sinks to death the bald and withered year,
When like a Titan young the new appears,
Thy ebon mother flees
The advent of thy birth.

Raptured I gaze, as at thy triumph march,
O'er startled uplands and bewildered dells,
The lurking shadows flee
Thy pointed javelins.

Cerulean banners float in mystic folds
Around thy throne to fan thy regal brow,
As ever onward rolls
Thy gorgeous pageantry.



The subject earth reveals her hidden stores,
And strews thy path with gems of odoured bloom,
While wanton zephyrs string
Their harps to sweetest sounds.

With prison dewes thick glistening on his wings,
The loyal lark breaks from his sodden cell,
And in heraldic strains
Proclaims the conqueror.

So would my eager soul forsake the gloom,
And in the hopeful glory of thy beams
Wake all its depths to frame
Brave song and purpose high.

Yet 'tis not mine the wish or power to swell
A pæan grand in Attic beauty drest,
But that my ravished soul
May publish what it feels.

For thou art worthy of all loyalty,
As down the rolling years prophetic strains
Have told thy cheering glow
And universal sway.

O ! let me follow in thy train afar
Across the purple mountains gold emblazed,
And share the jocund glee
Around thy chariot wheels ;

And leap the brooks that, like the violet,
Fold in their breast the beauty they adore ;
And in ambrosial bowers
The smiling hours prolong.

While in the murmurous pauses we will list
The mingled strains of Nature's seraphim
That flit like airy thoughts
Across thy threading beams.

O ! sweet is Evening's tender witchery
To pensive hearts in melancholy bound ;
In its dim calm they see
The reflex of their dreams.

But thou to me art dearer than the charm
Of dusky twilight with its lingering glow,
For thou art Nature's joy,
And Nature I adore.

SCOTTISH HEROISM.

O, DEAR beloved Fatherland, the tale has oft been told
 Of deathless glory and renown won by thy warriors bold.
 When vile oppression's hateful cloud hung like a pall of
 death
 On all thy bonnie mountain glens, the home of ancient
 faith,
 Then rose thy sons with sinews steeled at sound of
 bugle's swell,
 And hurled the tyrant from the land—the land we love
 so well.
 No despotism ever made a Scot to bow the knee,
 For tyranny can never bind what's fated to be free.

I scan the vista of the past, and lo! the vision brings
 A host of worshipped warriors stamped with the mien of
 kings;
 Whose looks spoke martial majesty, and in each speak-
 ing eye
 There gleamed the soul-ennobling light, the light of
 liberty.
 Whether in front of battle's clang, where right strove hard
 with might;
 Or o'er the crafty sea of State guiding the golden freight;

Or plodding in the rural vale by Nature taught to sing ;
Or thundering from the cloisters pale the message of the
King :
All, all possessed the hero-soul that grapples with the
foe,
Nor leaves the conquest till the palm of victory crowns
the blow.

Lo ! from the timely womb of time twin stars of hope
are born,
That lend the nation's firmament the lustre of the morn.
The patriot martyr draws his sword and fights for
Freedom's crown,
And, dying for his sacred rights, he lays his trophies
down—
Down at the feet of Freedom's king who made his foes
to learn,
The vengeance of a nation's wrongs at glorious Bannock-
burn.
And now, though centuries have flown, yet brilliant is
their fame,
And native pride swells every heart at mention of their
name.

The Church's bearded hero stands, while all around him
bleeds,
A pilot sure and steadfast in the stormy sea of creeds ;



Who shattered Rome's ascendancy, and preached with
pregnant power
The pure unsullied word of God, a stronghold and high
tower.

And stimulated by his zeal our Covenanting sires
Chose rather paths of penury than lack their souls'
desires.

When midnight hovered o'er their faith, Love's cheery
gleam was given
To guide their earthly pilgrimage and point their road
to heaven.

And he the wizard of the heart, to Scotland ever dear,
Who poured the wealth of Songland in a listening
nation's ear ;

Love's pain-girt prophet passion-rapt a while in silence
dreams,

Flings wide the floodgates of his soul, and music flows
in streams

Of living power and lofty thought, the language of the
heart,

Unknown to pedant sophistry or "all the gloss of art."

O, star that shines with steady gleam when other lights
grow dim,

Earth's nightly ones reflect thy beam and loud thy
praises hymn ;

The rustic feeds his fancy as he roams thy wealth among,
And Learning knows no vantage ground against thy
power of song.

The arid desert meets my view, and on its barren breast
Religion's pious pioneer is pillowed to his rest.

Sweetly he hears his Captain's voice sound o'er the strife
"Well done ;"

His bloodless campaign's over and the crown of victory
won.

He lies the bold heroic heart 'mong Britain's honoured
dead,

And Fame dwells on his deathless deeds whene'er her
roll is read.

His memory lights the darkened land where dusky
millions rove,

And binds the willing slave again—but with the cords of
love.

Our native land ! our native land ! long may thy children
shine

In all the virtues that around thy honoured name entwine.
What though it never may be ours to lead the battle's van,
Yet sterling worth can swell the soul of humble artisan.
'Tis ours to beautify our lot, whate'er that lot may be,
Prove worthy sons and daughters of the sires that made
us free.

Let every heart beat true to love and up for honour stand,
That Scotland ne'er may find a dearth of heroes in her
land.

TO MY LINTIE.

The Prince o' Whistlers.

Ay, dickie, weel may ye sit canty and croose,
 You're the joy and the favourite o' a' in the hoose ;
 For aneath that plain tippet o' marly grey
 A musical soul throbs wi' mony a lay.

O weel dae I mind when I first saw your face,
 Hoo I tried if the marks o' a cock I could trace ;
 For the red i' your breist an' the fire i' your e'e
 Made me think that ye wis what I wished ye to be.

An' when ye at last broke the chain o' reserve,
 An' lilted your numbers wi' freedom and verve,
 I thocht I'd gane wud—'twas sae meltin a strain,
 That I listened, and listened, and listened again.

They may talk o' their goldies, canaries, an a',
 Their bullies and siskins, they're naething ava ;
 They may sport a' the colours that fancy can bring,
 But it's a' ootward show—it's the sang that's the thing.

They hae a bit tune o' their ain, I opine,
But when mated wi' yours it's like water to wine.
Na ! show canna tickle oor tenderest part,
An' what pleasures the e'e aye should pleasure the heart.

Yet I lo'e a' your kind, frae a crow to a wran,
For I think love o' birds is inherent in man ;
But somehow or other, I canna tell why,
Your chirp's worth the sang o' the hale feathered fry.

Yestreen through the woodland I wandered alang,
My thochts centred a' in the heids o' a sang,
When the "chuckie-chuck-chee" o' a freen' o' your ain
Sent them a' to the winds, ne'er to gaither again.

Ootside you're alive to whatever's gaun on,
E'en the sparrows ye watch as they fecht on the rhone;
While to a' thing i' hoose you're aye on the alert—
You're an auld farrant loon, an' a perfect divert.

Yet whiles ye will tak' a bit thrawn tilavee
When ye dinna get hemp to your breakfast or tea ;
But ye ken it would mak' ye as fosie's a fule,
An' birdies when fat canna whistle sae weel.

I've aften been tauld 'twas a sin an' a shame
To tak' ye awa' frae your ain native hame ;
But their words ye belie, for ye whistle awa',
Be it open and sunny, or gloomy wi' snaw.

Just think on your mates on the muirland sae cauld,
An' the drift whirlin' thick frae the Norland sae bauld ;
Sma' motive hae they ere to whistle or sing,
Wi' naething to shelter their chitterin' wing.

Sae, Dickie, I think you're as weel what ye are,
As bravin' the element's hurricane war,
Whar thro' the lang winter nichts' drearysome din,
Ye shivered and slept in the hert o' a whin.

But I doot if you've listened to ocht o' my strain,
For you're aff in a transport o' passion again ;
Weel, weel ! sing awa', what ye scatter sae free,
Frees my bosom o' care, an' brings pleasure to me.

MIDNIGHT MUSINGS.


'Tis midnight, and I musing sit
Amid the silence of my room ;
The fire has narrowed in the grate,
And fancy only lights the gloom.

Without, the fitful winds and sleet
Hiss at their weird and tyrant will ;
A reveller on the sodden street
Wrings out an oath—then all is still.

The new year's primal day is gone
In chequered thought and dismal din,
And with it wish on wish have flown
In rosy hues to kith and kin.

Before me on the table lies
The record of a vanished year ;
But far beyond my spirit flies
On golden wings to boyhood's sphere.

I feel the tenderness of youth
Fall round me in its holy flow,
And with it all the joy and truth
That filled life twenty years ago.



I taste the more than mortal feast
That's spread along the breezy hills,
Ere dawn has startled all the east,
Or quivered in the mountain rills.

I breathe the air of innocence
Along the daisied slopes of morn,
Where hope basks in a glow intense—
Life's luscious rose without a thorn.

O, days of purity and peace,
Unfading as eternal love,
Ne'er can that morning music cease
Which seems an echo from above.

O, spring of life ! O golden streams
Where laved the boy's unwearied feet,
Ye wind and wimple in my dreams,
And sparkle on the crowded street.

With trembling hand I lift the latch
Of manhood's portal. Lo around
Gay flowers wanton to the touch,
And smile along the fairy ground.

O red, red rose ! divinely grand,
Though guarded by thy hidden thorn,
I culled thee with a daring hand,
And placed thee in my breast forlorn.

Fed by the dews the heart distils,
Its fragrance floods my being yet ;
A quiet joy my bosom fills
Without the shadow of regret.



INVOCATION TO FANCY.

O COME, thou fairy bright,
 And guide me with thy promptings chaste and free,
 When odours steal upon the wings of night
 Through silvern halls of moonlit witchery,
 And silence, robed in white,
 Lies slumbering on a fairy bank of flowers,
 Watched over by the stars through all the dreaming hours.

Why art thou fled from me ?
 It was not ever thus, when youthful thought
 Hung dull and brooding o'er life's canopy,
 Upon its lowering brow thy lustre wrought
 The rainbow Poesy.
 When all entranced within its circle bright
 My inner being glowed with pure reflected light.

I do remember well,
 When lonely sitting in the starlit gloom
 By sullen river's brim, thy music's swell
 Burst on my trancéd ear, then sweet perfume
 Filled all the dewy dell.
 Through lands enchanted on thy wings I rushed
 Till night died in the West, and dawn my spirit hushed.

Yet passing is thy joy
In fickle mood. Oft in my nightly dreams
Thy presence filled my fancies when a boy,
And girt me round with visionary beams ;
But, like a maiden coy,
You kissed me on the brow when still in sleep,
And fled when memory sought the impression sweet to
keep.

Yet would I not have thee
For ever haunt the chambers of my brain,
But like the zephyr lingering lovingly
Around the rose's bloom, with witching strain,
To woo its fragrant glee,
That what it hoards within its bosom's bound
May wake to wider spheres, transfusing all around.

A DREAM IDYL.

WHEN the morning god is gloating
On the bosom of the stream,
And the gauzy threads are floating
In the morn's translucent beam ;

When the fairy flowers are shaking
With diamond and pearl,
And the woodland echoes waking
To the bugle of the merle ;

Then with fairy Fancy guiding,
My impatient footsteps rove
Where enchantment is presiding
Over beauty, peace and love.

In the dingle, music-haunted,
Where the breezes whisper health,
And the regal spring has granted
All the sweetness of her wealth,

There I muse, a happy creature,
And I read, as in a book,
The philosophy of Nature
In the flashings of the brook.

And the reeds keep dipping, dipping
In the ripple of the stream,
Like a sighing mortal sipping
Of the joys that feed his dream.

And a spirit hovers o'er me
Nature's beauties to unfold,
And a poem is spread before me
Bound in living green and gold.

On its glowing page is written
Such a soul enchanting strain,
That my very brain seems smitten
With the passion of refrain.

Not an echo there of sorrow;
But the sweetness of its tone
Makes my limping numbers borrow
All the music of its own.

And a hope to me is clinging
Here within my sylvan home,
That the echoes of my singing
May awake a chord in some.

But I reckon not though earth's tunings
Wake to other touch than mine;
I have still the sweet communings
Of a soul at Fancy's shrine.

OOR WEE STURDY MAY.

LET poets rant in English gab their fancy rhymin' gear,
 As if they read the classic bards ilk day in a' the year;
 But I will lilt as weel's I can a humble Doric lay,
 About the hairum-scairum pranks o' oor wee sturdy May.

When March's bitin' win's gaed thro' the trees wi' eerie
 bum,
 An' tried to force the winnock in, and thundered doon
 the lum;
 An' frightened a' the women folk, and reddened every
 snoot,
 Was born the wean wha maks us a' stan to the richt-aboot.

The pastor ca'd her Mary, but she cut the maitter short,
 The "r's" a bugbear to the bairn, an' she saw nae use
 for't;
 Noo in the hoose or oot the hoose or rantin' at her play,
 She's only kent to neebor folk as oor wee sturdy May.

She's up afore the screich o' day, an' pu'in' at my beard,
 An' lat be as dark as pick, the fient a bit she's fear'd;
 "It's time fo' daddy gaun to wuk fo' peeshies—daddy 'ise,"
 An' if I don't get up at aince she deaves us wi' her cries.

An' noo she's got a "pompidoo," the pattern o' my sark,
Whilk sairs in turn a pinafore an' dishclood at her wark ;
She can the servant imitate, an' weel the lady play,—
There's makin's o' an actress guid in oor wee sturdy May.

Ilk dish her dumpy fingers grip, dees o' a broken heart,
An' when I flyte she sabs an' greets, an' acts the sorry
part ;
Sine in an instant aff she goes, the gayest o' the gay,
The're thin partitions 'tween the moods o' oor wee sturdy
May.

Yet tho' she maks me aften wild when I'm on study bent,
A streak o' kindness rins thro' a' her thro'-gaun merriment ;
She ronnies on "I'm mammie's pet, an' daddie's da'lin'
doo,"
An' as I write I hear her rattlin' at it i' the noo.

Lang may ye keep my bonnie bairn, your cheeks o' rosy
red,
Your form sae fair an' plumpy, an' your gouden curly
head ;
An' when ye reach to womanhood, if e'er ye see the day,
May common sense an' prudence guide my ain wee
sturdy May.

FAITH.

WHAT is it? Heaven's refulgent gift
 To cheer life's weary span,
 A bulwark when temptation's floods
 Sweep o'er the path of man.
 No power can quench its sacred flame,—
 Its influence never dies,
 But animates and gives the soul
 Its passport to the skies.

'Tis not alone with innocence
 It loves to make its stay,
 But enters through the gates of vice
 Where crime doth hold the sway.
 Even yonder convict in his cell
 Surrounded by his chains,
 Has dropt the manacles of sin,
 And trust in God remains.

Life's feeble fabric scarce can hold
 Its own before the blast,
 If not supported by that prop
 Whose strength shall ever last.
 Then brethren let your groundwork be
 Faith, steady, calm, and pure,
 It may but match the mustard seed,
 Yet you will live secure.

APRIL.

HAIL to thee ! nymph of gladness,
Favourite of the spheres :
Little you know of sadness,
Smiling through your tears.

Lend my bosom thy buoyance,
Lend it thy balmy breath ;
Touch with thy magical joyance
A heart that is saddened by death.

Now the dark winter is ended—
Darkest of all to me—
Hope with despair is blended—
Winter clinging to thee.

Marching in song and bustle,
Girded with witchery ;
Pause where my loved ones nestle
Under the willow tree.

And while thy footstep lingers,
Scatter thy pearly load ;
Paint with thy fairy fingers
Flowers on the hallowed sod.



Fairer than bud or blossom
Ever nurtured by thee,
Grew these flowers of my bosom,
Kissing it wantonly.

But a thief from the Northland
Plundered my jewels rare :
Now I stand like a tree on the moorland,
Withered, dejected, and bare,

Adrift on a waste of sorrow,
Blindly seeking the road ;
They in the golden morrow,
Gemming the garden of God.

Nothing they know of sadness,
Death, or the willow tree ;
Yet adorn, sweet nymph of gladness,
All that is left to me.

SPRING.

Now tyrant Winter with his mailed hand
 Has loosed his iron grasp from gentle earth,
 And stalks with slow, reluctant steps to where
 He glares defiance on the mountain tops.
 Yet there his subtle foe shall find him out,
 And strike the icy chaplet from his brows ;
 And all his bold imperiousness shall fall
 Before the gentle influence of Spring.
 Hark to the soul refreshing melody
 That swells and falls along the throbbing vale ;
 The dewy zephyrs are abroad to-day,
 The trumpet heralds of approaching Spring ;
 Along the expectant earth with glittering feet
 They flit like fairies wantonly,
 Kissing the tender daisy's rosy lips
 And hovering round the slumbers of the rose,
 Singing of coming wonders of delight,
 Of gladness born of sunny-mantled Hope.

And heaven again is smiling on the earth,
 And wraps it in a robe of mystery ;



The mountains glimmer in awakening green,
And all along the valley softly falls
The light of morning in a golden haze ;
And far away the landscape meets the sky,
Bathed in the mellow hues of purple blue.
The tinkling of the merry brook is heard
As down the glen it sports in careless glee,
Here, playing gaily round a mossy stone,
There, silent flooded with the joy of heaven ;
Like to a poet caught by Fancy's power,
Arrested by the subtle witchery
It drinks a moment of the holy joy.
Then breaks away in ecstasy of song,
Singing of primrose knolls in mossy dells,
And meadows green with golden buttercups,
Of waving woodlands murmurous of bees,
And all the soft voluptuousness that swells
The throbbing bosom of the early year.

The birds, too, feel the tender influence
Quicken the pulses of their dormant hearts.
No more the robin haunts the human homes,
But finds in Nature all his passion craves,
For in his heart love's fiery ardour glows,
Which lends a glory to his crimson breast.
And hark ! the piping of the merry merle,
The golden-billed ventriloquist in song.
How faintly far his numbers seem to sound,

Yet there he sits, a spot amid the green ;
With softened note and mellifluous tone
He wooes his dusky mate in budding bower.
The titmouse flits between the spreading boughs,
His green robes flashing in the threading rays ;
And there the gay woodpecker taps the beech,
As blithely he in measured hop ascends ;
All, all are gay and prodigal of song,
And Nature swells the rustic revelry.

And thou, my heart, what knowest thou of Spring ?
Where is the fruitage of thy budding year ?
Here stretched beneath the dappled dome of heaven
My thoughts are flitting as the random shades
That crowd the mountain side at breezy noon,
And wavering as the flight of zephyr's wing ;
But as that vagrant fairy wanders back
At love's behest to kiss the blushing rose,
So my thoughts turn and hover round the spot
That lends its sadness to the passing years.
The snowdrop only loves the clasp of Spring,
The lily lives in Summer's warm embrace,
So bloomed my flowers, while Spring and Summer
shone,
But at the breath of Winter drooped and died,
Leaving to withered hopes and pale decay
The once bloom-laden garden of my heart.

THE SANGS O' ROBIN.

AGAIN the "Twenty-fifth" comes roun'

That sets the heart a-throbbin',

An' Scotia's muse wi' laurel crown

Reminds me o' her Robin.

She bids me a' my numbers frame

In honour o' his deathless name,

That caps the dizzy heights o' fame

Wi' lustre grand.

Sae doun I sit, a rhymin' brither,

An' string my random thochts thegither,

Till Fancy strains her silken tether,

An' draps her wand.

Weel may auld Scotland cock her croun,

An' stap wi' queenly air ;

She never bore anither son

That lo'ed his mither mair.

For tho' he was a rovin' loon,

An' aften earned misfortune's froon,

He ne'er forgat a sang to croon

To her at hame.

Let a' his fauts be writ in water,
An' hushed be foul contumely's clatter,
An' let him first his great name splatter
That's free o' blame.

O, wha amang the sons o' sang
Can e'er wi' him compare?
His very name's a trumpet clang
To scatter dool an' care.
His sangs are sweet simplicity,
Enrobed in melting melody,
Yet glorious as the forest tree
In throbbing June.

He tore Hypocrisy asunder,
An' broke on Cant his crushing thunder,
Till timid Worth withdrew in wonder,
Then sang his tune.

The stirring strains o' "Scots wha hae"
Mak' every pulse to quiver,
An' Scotsmen live again the day
That crushed the foe for ever.
An' "Bonnie Doon!" O tender strain,
That tells o' passion's lingerin' pain,
Till tears rin doon the cheek like rain
Frae Pity's e'e.
An' radiant in song's glitterin' carry
There gleams the jewel "Highland Mary,"
On whose sad fate we often tarry,
Fu' pensively.



Hail! fun-inspirin' "Duncan Gray,"
Wha gied Meg's pride a blow;
An' canty age's couthy lay,
"John Anderson, my Jo."
"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,"
The sweetest love sang o' them a';
His "Bonnie Jean!"—aff hats, hurrah!
For Scotland's pride.
An' thro' the years is heard fu' clearly
The rustlin' o' "The Rigs o' Barley,"
As passion's joys they echo rarely
O' life's spring-tide!

O, sing me ower an' ower again
"O, wert thou in the cauld,"
While beauty blooms an' hearts are fain,
The theme can ne'er grow auld.
Fair in perfection's noble mien
"The Lass o' Ballochmyle" is seen;
For Nature's sel' has crowned her queen
O' her fair train.
But list ye to the pawky kimmer
That begs advice wi' chirp an' chimmer,
While brawly kens she nane 'll win her
But bauld "Tam Glen."

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot?"
"Na, faith!" cries solemn Truth;
The chain o' life's ower jimp, I wot,
To miss the links o' youth.

Wha hasna kent the "sacred hour"
That whispered love's bewitchin' power,
An' gied the heart a gowden dower
 It ne'er can tine?
While "Green grows the rashes, O,"
In ilka hoor that passes, O,
We'll pledge the bonnie lasses, O,
 For "auld lang syne."

Ay, Burns! while wags our mither tongue
 In conscious exaltation,
Thy matchless music will be sung
 With heartfelt adoration.
And while we sing thy measured art,
May a' thy meaning true impart,
For *soond alane* ne'er fired a heart,
 But music *spoken*.
So, while the nation's pulse is beating,
We hail thy natal day with greeting,
And raise our voice with pride repeating
 Thy kingly token.



SUNDOWN.

Now the rattle and turmoil of labour is past,
 And the monarch of day is retiring to rest ;
 A radiance divine o'er the landscape is cast
 From the deep golden glow that transfigures the west ;
 And the cloudlets that dapple the ceiling of heaven
 Are tipped with a glory the sunlight has given.

The zephyrs that slept through the languishing day
 Now play o'er the surface of river and lake ;
 The linnet that sang from the tapering spray
 Now rehearses connubial joys in the brake ;
 While the bells that are ringing the people to prayer
 Now swell and now fall in the evening air.

The bonnie Earn, stream of my fancy and youth,
 Glides gracefully circling Dallerie's green wood,
 And reflects in its breast like a mirror of truth
 The beauties that live by its murmuring flood.
 O, these beauties could never more beautiful be,
 And doubly they're dear in the gloaming to me.

I see through the woodland with emerald drest
Sol kissing good night to my dear native town,
Where Nature reigns loveliest, dearest, and best,
Though factions and pride have dismantled her crown.
Yes, Nature has given thee, queen of the Strath,
What man seeks to cast from his progressive path.

The circling sweep of the swallow through space
Is tardy compared to my fancy to-night ;
In the past's golden volume she glories to trace
With the finger of love every youthful delight ;
At her touch vanished pleasures of boyhood appear,
And I taste them again when the gloaming is near.

There's a joy in the earth that's akin to my soul
As it leaps and is free from the burden of thought ;
There's a heavenly sweetness pervading the whole
Of God's labouring earth, which with blessing is fraught.
O, the softness of twilight falls over my heart
Like the first dream of love that can never depart.

Can aught of despondency's baleful despair
Prevail in the breast in a moment like this ?
Can misery wallow in penury where
The joys of Elysium mingle in bliss ?
Ah ! shadows seem deeper the brighter the sky,
And laughter oft loudest when sorrow is nigh.



But the fire-flood of heaven has fled from the west,
And a curtain of mist limits vision and joy ;
The rapture my feelings so lately possessed
Now is mingled with gloom and depression's alloy ;
Our life's mellowed gloaming with joys may be bright,
But they vanish when gloaming surrenders to night.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN AT A REPRESENTATION OF "ROB ROY" BY THE
CRIEFF DRAMATIC CLUB, 21ST JANUARY, 1887.

WHEN first ambition pandered to our dreams,
And trimmed the light that round the Drama beams,
No selfish motives did our breasts inflame—
The public's favour was our dearest aim.
Yours was the right, if justice called it forth,
To crush our embryo lisplings at their birth ;
But mild forbearance all your conduct framed,
You kindly pardoned where you might have blamed.
And now, again, before you we appear
With mingled feelings of suspense and fear,
But hope expands, our sinking spirits rise
At sight of joy expectant in your eyes.
Grateful for generous praise in years agone,
When all your happy feelings were our own,
With hope begotten of your prized esteem,
We crave indulgence in a higher theme.

No Irving here, the glory of the age,
Directs the mystic glamour of the stage ;

Nor gentle Terry's sympathetic art
Delights the eye and elevates the heart.
While wildly grand the regal nightingale
Pours forth his passion music in the vale,
Yet none less beautiful at close of day
The lowly linnet's unassuming lay,
So we, while all unfledged, when art would soar,
Awhile may keep care's phantom from your door,
And scorning foul Vulgar's behest,
May wake a ripple in a placid breast.

'Tis ours to paint within the passing hour
The subtle beauty of the Wizard's power,
The mighty master of the magic art
That tells the workings of the human heart.
From the bright genius of this matchless story
There gleams a ray of Caledonia's glory,
And all enamoured of its witching tone
Have made its voice peculiarly their own.
But lands afar, transported at its sight,
Must scan its beauty by an alien light.

Here, valour worthy of our native land
Is boldly pictured with a master hand ;
The homely wit that hedges Jarvie's name
Stands all unrivalled on the roll of fame,
And humour, bubbling from its quondam source,
Strikes native feeling with peculiar force.

Here, villany—the substance of the play—
Struts in its hollow courage for a day ;
But soars to fall, for vengeance follows hard,
And vice, like virtue, has its own reward.

Friends ! who have given your help and sympathy,
And cheered our early efforts willingly,
Extend your generous sentiments to-night,
And judge our failings in a lenient light.
And should success attend our efforts here,
Applaud it, for applause to all is dear ;
So we may all in mutual delight
Renew in future all our joy to-night.



TO THE CUCKOO.

WHAT! wandering minstrel, art thou really come
 To wake the slumbering echoes of thy voice?
 O why wilt thou not make this isle thy home,
 And cause our wintry feelings to rejoice?

Thy startling tones rouse boyhood from the grave,
 And weave again the spell of witchery,
 Joyous and fascinating as the wave
 That laps the beach with measured harmony.

How often have I crept through tangled dell
 With bated breath, and feelings of delight,
 To list more near thy mystic music's swell,
 And gaze in wonder on thy plumage bright.

And now in manhood I would fain rehearse
 The wanton freedom of my boyhood's days,
 When thou wert more to me than poet's verse
 Or science deep with all its potent rays.

What though thou art to egotism given,
 In singing ever of thy self-given name?
 Yet that same song tells life is but a season,
 And not the lengthened beauty of a dream.

Sweet bird ! methinks the secret of thy power
O'er human hearts lies in thy brief sojourn ;
So to that span I would not add an hour,
But trim a song to welcome thy return.

MUTABILITY.

BUT yesterday the vernal earth
 Lay pulsing under smiling skies,
 Where beauty had its hourly birth
 In every floweret's starry eyes !
 The zephyrs wandered at their will,
 Love-laden with the rose's breath ;
 And Nature, jubilant with life,
 Knew not the chilling fear of death.

But soon, too soon, through all her frame
 The spirit of an unseen power
 Crept silently with wasting flame,
 And sere'd the glow of brake and bower.
 And fast on Autumn's footsteps rushed
 Fierce Winter, girt with death and blight ;
 Now he alone stands spectral-eyed
 To see the year die in the night.


As Nature's beauty blooms and dies,
 So mortal life's mutations pass
 With all its pageantry and power,
 Like breath upon the polished glass.
 Earth's joys are fleeting as the ray
 That morn upon the stream has shed,

Let but a cloudlet cross its path
And all its sunny charm has fled.

Familiar forms vacate the scene
Where swells the Sabbath's joyous hymn,
Whose voices to my ravished ears
Seem echoed tones of seraphim.
Afar 'mid alien spheres their strains
Will wake religion's holy glee,
While in their wonted place will live
A sweet and fragrant memory.

How oft is friendship like the bird
That seeks our shores when skies are bright,
And in the genial summer ray
Diffuses naught but pure delight.
But when Adversity has blown
Its herald blast, with selfish fears
It dreams of danger, trims its wings,
And, like the swallow, disappears.

O Power Supreme ! whose mystic will
Directs what mortals hear and see,
Teach our vain murmurs to be still,
Nor cavil at Thy just decree.
While everything around declares
The fickleness of earth's caress,
Thine own Almighty presence wears
The steadfast robe of faithfulness.



BY THE EARN.

How passing fair art thou, my native Strath,
 In all thy varied show of field and wood !
 What random beauties strew the wanderer's path,
 As Nature's voice he hears in solitude !
 Thine is the look that never knows decay ;
 For Winter's frown can't scare thy Summer smile,
 Or, touching thee, but adds a milder ray
 Of mellowed light that softer seems the while ;
 And, flooding thee as beauty floods the rose,
 The bonnie Earn gleams, and carols as it flows.

What tho' the light of later Autumn lies
 Along the saddened bosom of the plain ;
 Yet here is beauty softer than the dyes
 Of wanton Summer with her gaudy train ;
 The thousand hues that paint the oak's proud stem,
 Blend with the tender birch's changing green ;
 And luscious brambles, bending o'er the stream,
 Dip in its flood with feathery fern between.
 And all is mirrored faithfully beneath—
 A fairy world of beauty, unsullied by a breath,

Yet must my spirit own the silence wakes
A longing for the tuneful feathered throng ;
I miss the melting thrush whose music makes
The very woods enamoured of his song—
The linnet, too, that only seemed to sing
To soothe the tender bosom of his love ;
And witching wood-lark singing on the wing,
And the soft murmur of the cooing dove.
All now are silent in the waning year,
And only redbreast sings pathetically clear.

I hear the wail of Winter in my ear,
His dark wing hovers o'er the mountain's brow ;
Yet lightly will he shed his influence sere,
On this dear spot where I am musing now.
As Fame's green laurel cannot withered grow,
'Though Hate's foul breath its purity assail ;
So will these scenes with sunny memories glow,
When Winter's cheerless mantle wraps the vale.
A golden halo, born in Summer hour,
Rests on each hallowed nook, and proves its lasting
dower.

And thou, sweet stream of boyhood's happy day !
Thou beauteous shrine of many a musing soul !
How oft by thee I've dreamed the hours away
When gladness reigned, or sorrow held control.

Long may thy rippling beauty woo the morn
That floods with gold thy mazy wanderings;
And love along thy bonnie banks be born
In hearts that flutter at thy whisperings,
The magnet of my waking thoughts thou art,
Till, ever drawn to thee, I seem of thee a part.

ELLIE'S GRAVE.

O, DREARY, dreary soun's the moan
 O' Nature in her sorrow,
 Lamentin' a' her beauties gone
 'Neath surly Winter's furrow.
 An' as I ponder hoo o' late
 Sae busy Death's been reapin',
 I wander near the spot sae dear
 Where gentle Ellie's sleepin'.

The robin, songster o' decay,
 Cowers on the naked timmer,
 An' sings his sweet but plaintive lay,
 A requiem for the summer.
 Love's spring time seems to fill his thochts,
 For he sings wi' mickle feelin',
 An' I think awhile hoo my Ellie's smile
 Kept spring aye in my shielin'.

When nicht's gray mantle haps the earth
 An' starnies blink fu' cheery,
 I think upon my life's past mirth
 An' my heart grows grit an' weary.

For the gloamin' aye was passion's hour
 When poesy was beamin',
 But the spell has flown sin' Ellie's gone,
 An' my study ends in dreamin'.

An' my dreams are centred a' below
 The kirkyard's gloomy shadows,
 Whaur the eerie soond o' Earn's flow
 Floats nichtly o'er the meadows :
 Whaur the stars shed doon a holier licht,
 An' the dew speaks o' their weepin',
 And the siller gleam o' Luna's beam
 Plays ower my darlin' sleepin'.

NIGHT.

NIGHT, wrapt in solemn mystery,
Engulphs the aftermath of day ;
The frolic winds in slumber lie
Upon the heaving bay.

Swiftly the cloudy veil is rent
That hid from longing mortals' gaze
God's glory in the firmament,
The throbbing, starry blaze.

Like stargleams on the waves' unrest—
Mute echoes of a heavenly sphere—
The golden memories flood my breast,
Calm, shadowless, and clear.

Though distance holds thee, thou art near,
In every star thy face I see ;
The flowers' sweet breath is thine, the clear
Still night is full of thee.

AN AUTUMN SCENE.

GIRT with the sadness of the waning year,
Sweet Nature shudders and her face grows pale ;
No sunshine lights the glory of her hair,
As when she wantoned in the flowery vale.

Lone is the light that lies upon the lea,
The once bespangled lea all daisy dyed ;
Where summer's lights and shadows in their glee
Wove verdant beauties by the lambkin's side.

No more the brooklet carols to the day,
But listless murmurs o'er its stony bed :
The sweetness of his numbers passed away
When heaven's pure radiance from its bosom fled.

Hark ! to the pheasant drumming as he wings,
A quivering dart, straight for the silent wood,
Where with a breaking heart the robin sings
His requiem song in leafless solitude.

The rooks' nests swing all tenantless and lone,
Like boats at anchor on a heaving sea ;
While 'mong the barren boughs with weary moan
The homeless winds are sobbing ceaselessly.

The spirit of the winter hovers near,
His alien horn a primal blast has blown :
Benchonzie shivers with foreboding fear,
As round his form a robe of white is thrown.

The sleepy hours fall in the lap of night,
Soothed by the tender glimmer of a star
That in the east grows tremulous with light
As day wheels westward on his leaden car.

And so life wanes, and wearied souls behold
The death of Nature with a sinking heart,
And see far out upon the barren wold
Hope's light extinguished, and life's joys depart.

Hopes like the flowers all rosy hued in bloom
Now lie all trodden in a season's stain ;
But flowers shall deck again the winter's tomb,
While withered hopes can never bloom again.



TO A BUTTERFLY IN LATE AUTUMN.

HAIL ! flitting fay with painted wing,
What pleasure to my heart you bring,
As on the crisp and chilly breeze
You zig-zag dance with buoyant ease.
I see again the summer bowers
Sport living green and blushing flowers,
And mark the rosy virgin morn
Weave silken glories on the thorn,
And o'er the darkly solemn fir
A robe of dewy gossamer,
And Sol bedeck with diamonds gleaming
The bosom of the brooklet dreaming,
Which at his touch seems all transformed,
And into rippling song has warmed,
Flowing away thro' daisied meads
Where'er its careless fancy leads.

The picture fades, and now I see
The dull earth lying sleepily,
With not a smile upon its face
To woo thee to its cold embrace.
The woods once flushed with loveliness
Now shrink with fear at care's caress,

And from their lips there comes no sound
To startle echo's sleep profound,
Save that low moan of nameless fear—
Joy's sorrow over Nature's bier ;
And through each throbbing pause of pain
The redbreast's fitful requiem strain.

What woo'd thee from thy slumbrous cave
To breast the autumn's chilly wave ?
Perchance the summer's madrigal
Kept sounding in thy heart till all
Thy being rose to slumber's tide,
And cast the subtle spell aside,
To seek once more the bowers of June,
And dance to sportive zephyr's tune ;
To wanton thro' the laughing hours
The fairy lover of the flowers—
To find what once was honied bliss
Had withered into wilderness,
And all that round thy heart did cling
Had vanished with thy vanishing.

So man, when after many years
Of pleasure, or, it may be, tears,
Would fain retrace the scenes again
That listened to his boyhood's strain,
To find, alas ! that youth's bright hue
Can ne'er for manhood bloom anew,



And all its pathways daisied dyed
Are covered with an alien pride.
The brook, the bowers, and braes are there,
But bathed in foreign atmosphere,
And with a sigh he turns away
From what had charmed his early day,
And walks again in sober glee
The fadeless fields of memory.

TURRET WATER.

Now Nature lists, her singers trill
In many a merry stave ;
A glory rests on vale and hill,
And gilds the rippling wave.

And thou, sweet stream, that wimples clear
Through tangled brake and thorn,
Again thy merry voice I hear
On this my birthday morn.

Though thou hast seen the floweret pine,
The paling of the leaf,
Yet that sweet symphony of thine
Is never tuned to grief.

Thou greetest heaven's firmament
With warblings gay and free ;
A world of care has never lent
Its sentiment to thee.

No classic story wreathes thee round
With haloed witchery,
Yet every bank is fairy ground,
The haunts of memory.



Rapt in a joy unspeakable,
I on thy green banks rest,
And dreams of elfin childhood well
And surge within my breast.

Again the child barefooted thirsts
To leave the noisy street,
And virgin happiness outbursts
In daisies at his feet.

The vain chase of the storied bird
To list its cuckoo cry,
Like airy dreams by Fortune stirred—
Delusive butterfly.

The merry romp with bat and ball,
The fairy circling dance,
Are pleasures I would fain recall
From vanished innocence.


O, stream that fed my infancy
With Hope's inspiring strain,
Hast thou no sympathy with me
In manhood's joy or pain !

Yet I, like thee, my way pursue
Through thorns and flowery grove,
Till bursting from their bounds I view
The fuller sea of love.

THOUGHTS ON THE NEW YEAR.

SWIFTLY the year is merging in eclipse,
And worn-out Nature shudders at its fate.
Wrapt in the snowy vesture of the dead,
She hides the relics of a season's pride,
As if she felt her lacerated joys
Would chill the fervour of the infant year ;
And while the old year's memories I view,
I stand upon the threshold of the new.

Thou coming year, what mysteries of life
Lie focused in thine undiscovered page ;
What deeds of love, what fallacies of hate
Will warp and emanate from thy teeming breast.
Veiled future ! what art thou ?—the coming time
When cold affliction, tugging at the heart,
Bids Hope at last relinquish all her joys ;
When morning, opening with her ambient light
Threads joyous Nature with her golden beams,
But envious forces gather ere the noon,
And, bursting, wreck all prestige of delight.
Such the decrees that fill thy pregnant womb
For many on this arid waste of Time,
And such may be the destiny of him
That sings the advent of thy future reign.



And yet the rising year may bring us peace
With chastened feelings from our former woes,
When Hope once more shall spread her wanton
wing,
And find success pursuing higher aims ;
When gaily digging deep the well of truth
We grasp what fancy never could rehearse ;
And viewing earth's adornments we learn
To look from Nature up to Nature's God.
As fancy ruminates among the past,
And probes anew the wound the heart sustained ;
Brings years to view of wasted energy,
And flippant hours that should have fed the mind
With gems of thought from Wisdom's sacred fount,
So we would glean from retrospective flights
The stern necessity of purer aims,
To lift the heart o'er sordid selfish ends,
And teach the tongue but what the heart bespeaks,
To cultivate and use our several powers
For what a Higher Power has designed,
And safe behind the armour of resolve
We fight the battle of the coming year.

SPRING IN THE WOODS.

Now hushed the storm-king's song of wrath,
That echoed down the mountain path ;
And fled the long and lonesome night,
That chilled our hearts and dimmed our sight.
Grim Winter now has fled apace,
And Spring sits smiling in his place ;
The dirge of death that filled the earth
Has melted in the song of mirth.

An unseen power, with patient skill,
Works in the woodland calm and still ;
The spectral trees, once bleak and bald,
Are kindled into emerald.
Sweet odours permeate the dell,
And charm the senses with the spell
Of Paradise, whose heavenly birth
Has spread benignity on earth.

Amid the relics of the storm
The snowdrop rears its virgin form,
Like Hope upon the wings of Faith
Uprising from the bed of death.
The primrose and the sweet bluebell
Emboss the bosom of the dell ;



And pearly daisies lavishly
Are scattered o'er the dewy lea.

The brook that skirts the woodland way
With rippling music fills the day ;
While quickly fading from the eye,
The singing lark ascends the sky.
And hark ! like anthem clear and strong,
The thristle, pioneer of song,
Floods with his strain the budding grove,
And wakes the languid soul to love.

My spirit leaps to see the flowers,
And birds a-building in the bowers ;
The lambkin on the daisied lea,
In sunshine sporting merrily—
To hear the hum of early bee
Float like an aerial symphony,
And all the gladsome merry din
That ushers buxom summer in.

O sweetest time of all the year,
When hope buds sweetly reappear
Around the portals of a heart
That long hath felt the winter's smart.
To me thy throbbing freshness brings
My boyhood back on fairy wings ;
When life knew not foreboding fears,
Regrets, nor vanities, nor tears.

THE SCULPTOR.

ALONE, with naught to scare the thoughts that animate
his brow,
The sculptor sits within his home at high meridian
glow ;
Yet not alone, for near him rest, transcendent as the
day,
The mighty works that genius wrought in ages passed
away—
Immortal gems of lofty art, bright records of the fire
That raged within the breasts of men who did to fame
aspire ;
Leaving the impress of their thoughts on marble's hoary
brow,
Which neither time nor wrath of man could sully or lay
low.
There fiery Mars, with martial front and visage dark as
night,
Holds in his brawny arms the shield and weapons of his
might ;
And sweet Apollo's graceful form, robed in divine attire,
His count'nance beaming with the tones that live within
his lyre ;



And heavenly Venus bending o'er her urchin of device,
Whose fiery arrows set aglow hearts long encased in ice.
Who could behold those matchless forms whose beauty
is the dower

Of nations, and not feel within a soul-enthraling power—
A longing wish to write our name in memory's glowing
page,

And live enthroned in hearts of men through many a
future age?

Such visions o'er the sculptor's brain in quick succession
flit,

As dwelling on the names with which his sympathies
are knit,

He strikes, and every stroke reveals a soul imbued with
might,

To grapple with the block of thought and carve it into
light.

His thoughts are moulded into form as rapidly they
come—

The image of his Maker leaps from out oblivion's gloom.
Wrapt in the folds of Genius' robes, scarce tainted by
the earth,

His mind was wafted far above the region of its birth ;
Fed by the holy nourishment of heaven's seraphic flame,
He wove from out his brain a work immortal as his name.
Unlike the life of feeble man which withers in a day,
It spurns the crumbling touch of Time and sneers at
grim Decay.

BLUE EYES.

WHEN the morning glories burn
When the day its tale hath told,
All my fancies fondly turn
To a maid with heart of gold.
Happy eyes so fond and true
Beaming like the welkin blue.

Opening like a tender flower
To the smiling of the morn ;
Health and purity her dower,
Sweeter bud was never born.
Witching with her starry eyes
Breathing all of Paradise.

Softly sweet my darling's voice
As she sings her song to me ;
Making all my heart rejoice
With its winning melody.
Sweeter far those tones to me
Than fairy strains on moonlit sea.



Over all her sway's complete
As she scatters wide her store
Of delight, like violet sweet
Breathing fragrance more and more.
While to all her smile is free
Keeps her sweetest one for me.

Storms may shadow life's fair skies
Fortune's smile grow dark and cold ;
Yet my darling's happy eyes
Beam like sunglints on the wold,
Brightening up the path of pain
Gilding sorrow's sodden stain.

What the future holds for thee
Gentle maiden who can tell ?
May the love thou bear'st for me
Ever in thy bosom dwell.
Love from thee seems part divine
Baby blue eyes ! Baby mine !

A DIRGE.

THE year is dying, slowly dying,
 Couched in misery and rain ;
The winds are sighing, faintly sighing,
 Moaning like a child in pain.
Nature's pallid brow is bare,
Naught of smile or mirth is there ;
Where the hues of summer shone,
Death has set his seal upon.

The leaves are lying, thickly lying,
 Burdened with a season's stain ;
Time is flying, quickly flying,
 Never to return again.
Withered every fancy, where
Hope lies strangled in her lair ;
Joys have faded one by one,
Death is near when hope is gone.



Sonnets.



SHELLEY.

O BARD ! immortal in thy loveliness,
 Beaming resplendent in the realm of song ;
 What weird enchantments to thy name belong,
Soul-trancing wizard of unweariedness !
Throughout that long and gladsome summer day
 How reeled my senses 'neath thy magic spell,
 When like thy skylark from its sodden cell,
I soared through sunlit glories far away ;
Where rapt I walked in paradise that beamed
 With beauty blooming through the fadeless years,
And heard the strains of melody that seemed
 The floating echoes of eternal spheres ;
But at the mortal memory of pain
I dropped like lead to common earth again.


JANUARY.

HUSHED is the voice of Nature save the wail
Of homeless winds lone wandering in despair
Through spectral woods that loom all bleak and bare
Above the pallid bosom of the vale.
The hoary sage's Janus visage throws
Upon the girdled earth a frown and smile ;
There sullen Retrospection lines his brows
Here Hope is waking to its infant wile
And we would rather court uncertainty
'Than dwell amid the Past's ignoble gloom ;
Fair Nature wrapt in seeming misery
Yet silent travails with a season's bloom.
So, if the present shadows all our glee
Joy's bud is rounding in the future's womb.



MUSIC.

'Tis wondrous strange that music's paeon voice
Should rouse to rapture all my slumberous brain,
And touch the chords that vibrate youth's refrain
When manhood draws from life maturer joys.
Yet so it is. The brook's gay rippling song,
The wailing volume of the sounding firs
Will pour a flood of memory along
The track of years, when passion scarcely stirs.
Happy the man whose mind has grasped the key
That opes the golden gates of harmony,
While round him surge the discords and the jars
Of life's strange medley : then his thoughts may be
A true rehearsal even to the bars
That guide the chorus of eternity.



SONNET.

WHY do the evening zephyrs at their play
Kissing with dewy lips the blushing roses,
Thrill to the passion of an early day
And wake the joy that in my heart reposes ?
'Tis memory dearest, dreaming of the hour
When love had rounded into bud, and we,
While gloating o'er it in its purity
Deemed all of fairy earth our mingled dower.
Fate ever fretful may have bent the flower
That bloomed the glory of our summer years,
Yet still its fragrance fills our autumn bower
In pleasure's sunshine or in sorrow's tears :
Tenderly placid as a summer sea,
Its dreams are sweeter for the spring to be.

TO ALEX. G. MURDOCH.

POET of might, in whose aspiring soul
Deep inspiration is with genius wed
Whose mind transcendent is by fancy fed—
Bearing thee forward to the honoured goal.
Thy glowing numbers cannot brook control
But onward flow, refreshing life's tired dream
And feeding in our breast the hallowed stream
Of love, which widens as the seasons roll.
Sing on sweet singer of the lofty strain ;
To thee belongs the power to lift the heart
From miry depths, and free it from the pain
Of native gloom,—in truth a noble part.
Sublime in thought thy works grim Time defy,
And bind thy name to immortality.

SONNET.

Written at Strathallan.

WITH feelings fired by Valour's soulful lay
I tread the ground that heroes trod of old
When wildly grand the slogan music rolled,
A fierce incentive to the martial fray.
Around me lie dim relics of the past,
Mute emblems of a rude yet simpler age,
When man insurgent mimic war did wage
In civil broil, hate's vile iconoclast.
I seem to hear the clansmen's battle-cry,
And see the serried ranks with claymores gleam,
Then headlong rush with doubtful fame to die,
Or haply live through exile's bitter dream.
And though that phantom from my brain be fled
Yet round me floats the presence of the dead.

AT THE GRAVE OF ROB ROY.

GIRT with the silence of the eternal hills,
 And the lone echoes of the faded years,
 The Celtic hero sleeps, unknown to fears
 That hedged his earth path, born of feudal will.
 The dreamy gazer looks beyond the graves
 That rise in billowy sequence all around,
 To where the thrilling pibrochs fiercely sound
 A gathering cry, and ruddy tartan waves.
 Swift as the mountain eagle seeks his prey
 The kilted Caterans swoop upon the foe ;
 "E'en do and spare not*" rising o'er the fray,
 Nerves the brave heart, and guides the claymore's blow ;
 But the dream vanishes at friendship's tone,
 And war but whispers on a carven stone.

* The motto of the Macgregors.

CRIEFF IN SUMMER.

A Sonnet.

QUEEN of the Strath ! how royally she wears
Her native beauty. Crowned with nature's wealth,
She reigns in pride of purity and health,
The magnet of a motley crowd that shares
Her open largess. Calmly she surveys
The wanton tide of splendour that repeats
Its daily flow of music on her streets,
The gathered harmony of a thousand ways.
Hers is a sweet and profitable reign.
While garlanded with beauty, every path
That threads the verdure of the spreading Strath
Converge upon her borders that maintain
Naught but the peace of Nature, the delight
That floods the starry stillness of the night.





